HEBREW TALES

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Hebrew Tales

SELECTED AND TRANSLATED
FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE

ANCIENT HEBREW SAGES

BY

HYMAN HURWITZ

Revised and Edited by

GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

IN 1826 a little book appeared in London which immediately attracted attention. It was neatly printed, in splendid, large type, making it by far the most attractive output of the Jewish press of that period. Intrinsically, too, it represented the flowering of Hebrew literature in England. Indeed, no other English work on a Jewish subject, with the possible exception of Emanuel Deutsch's memorable essay on "The Talmud"—published ten decades later, in *The Quarterly Review*—was so favorably received.

Its elevated tone, simple dignity, and choice phrasing, no less than its modest learning, combined to make it the most popular repertory of Jewish lore and legend for more than a generation, and its unique value as a source-book of Rabbinic tradition, to Jew as well as Gentile, has not been impaired by the publication of a host of similar works, a few of which, as the anthologies of Fuerstenthal, Levi, Polano, and S. Baring-Gould, are still highly prized by students.

Hyman Hurwitz's "Hebrew Tales" is, moreover, a notable contribution to *English* literature. It is original, distinctive, and authoritative, a noble message from Israel to the

nations—a human document as forceful and effective, in a certain sense, as the "Morals" of Seneca, or the "Thoughts" of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. It may, perhaps, be inferred that if the author had been a pagan ruler, or a Christian prelate, his version of the sayings of the ancient Jewish Sages would have issued from the press of Aldus, Caxton, and Elzevir—or even from the bindery of East Aurora. But Hyman Hurwitz was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, and *habent sua fata Judaei.*

Regarding the author's life very little is known. He was born in Poland, in the year 1770—the exact date can not be ascertained—and died in London, July 18, 1844. Like so many of his compatriots, he early acquired a remarkable proficiency in Hebrew and Rabbinic studies. When quite a young man he joined his father in England, where that pious Talmudist had been residing for some time, and set about, in order to earn his livelihood as a teacher of Hebrew, to diligently study the English language. At an academy conducted by a Christian gentleman, he was appointed to take charge of the religious training of several Jewish children, and had the opportunity of applying himself to the study of science and the classics. His assiduity, "mildness of disposition and suavity of manners," soon gained him many friends, who aided him in the es-

tablishment of "The Highgate Academy," in 1799, over which institution for the education of the young he continued to preside for a period of twenty-two years. In May, 1821, he was compelled to retire, owing to his impaired health, which was sufficiently restored to enable him to take up, a few years later, the duties of his new appointment as Professor of Hebrew at London University College. This was a distinction which had never before been accorded to a Jew, and that the choice was a judicious one is attested by the fact that he remained in office up to the time of his death.

We are told by his biographer that he was beloved, esteemed, and respected by the professors and students, as well as by all who knew him.

"He was religious without bigotry; benevolent without ostentation; learned without egotism; and of a disposition whose reserve bordered on diffidence. He never courted the rich, nor condescended to flattery; and he ever shunned publicity." Though not at any time active in congregational affairs, he was an honorary member of the vestry of the Great Synagogue.

Hurwitz's literary activity extends over thirty-five years. His published writings do not cover a very wide range, but they bear ample testimony to his thoroughness and eru-

dition. And whether he wrote Hebrew verse or English prose, on grammar or exegesis or apologetics, his graceful style made the perusal a pleasure, not a task. In addition to several treatises on the rudiments of the Hebrew language may be mentioned his Hebrew elegy on the death of Princess Charlotte—done into English verse by his friend, Coleridge; the dirge chanted at the obsequies of George III.—likewise rendered into English by a Christian friend, W. Smith; the metrical Hebrew version of the British anthem, "God Save the King"; his "Vindiciæ Hebraicæ"—in which he blends "much erudition, elegance of style, and well-applied wit"; his "Letter to Isaac Lyon Goldsmith," in defence of the Jewish religion; and "An introductory lecture delivered at the University of London," November 11, 1828—which, no doubt, is the date of his induction into office. It is not generally known that he published a specimen of a new revised Hebrew text of the Bible, in 1835, and that he supervised the printing of the first Hebrew Bible in the United States, issued by William Fry, in Philadelphia, 1814. In this connection, it is interesting to note that a Hebrew hymn, composed by Hurwitz, and set to music by Louis Leo, was chanted, seven years after the author's death, at the consecration of Temple B'nai Jeshurun, in New York City.

His fame, however, rests chiefly upon his delightfully written "Hebrew Tales," of which two editions were printed in London, in the year 1826, one in New York, in 1847, and another in Edinburgh, in 1863. Four separate editions appeared in German, and one or two stories were published in French.

Three tales were furnished for the collection by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who appears to have been somewhat of a Hebraist, since he figures as the translator of a dirge, from the Hebrew of Hurwitz, into English. Coleridge had already inserted them in *The Friend*, and they constitute the second, third, and fourth, in the present volume.

That this admirable anthology had a distinct purpose to serve may be gleaned from the author's prefatory "Essay on the still-existing remains of the Hebrew Sages . . . ," which had already appeared as a separate tract in the same year. It is unquestionably a "Tendenzschrift," apologetic and expostulatory in tone, designed to defend and expound the writings and traditions of the Rabbis, whose "instructive parables and tales . . . are so many miniature paintings of the habits, manners, and modes of thinking, of an ancient people at a remote period of antiquity" ("Essay," London ed., 1826, p. 81).

Inasmuch as it is no longer necessary to

assume this attitude in speaking of Jewish literature, the Essay is not reprinted in the present edition, the object of which is to make accessible, in convenient form, Hurwitz's classic "Tales." Since copies of the little book are not readily obtained, its republication is certainly justifiable.

In order to give it unity of interest, the Editor has ventured to omit, beside the "Aphorisms and Apophthegms," printed at the end of the original edition, a number of items which can not properly be classified as "tales," together with the explanatory notes. However, no liberties were taken with the text, except to modernize the orthography of proper names, to abbreviate the chapter-headings and the introductions to some of the stories.

The references, which in no single instance are exact or complete, have been carefully verified and amplified by the Editor, and it is hoped that they may prove useful to students.

GEORGE ALEXANDER KOHUT.

NEW YORK.

HEBREW TALES

Moses and the Lamb

The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works.—Psalm cxlv. 9.

Our wise instructors relate, that while Moses was attending Jethro's flock in the wilderness, a lamb strayed from the herd. Moses endeavored to overtake it, but it ran much faster than he, till it came near a fountain, where it suddenly stopped, and took a draught of water. "Thou little dear innocent creature," said Moses, "I see now why thou didst run away. Had I known thy want, on my shoulders would I have carried thee to the fountain to assuage thy thirst. But, come, little innocent, I will make up for my ignorance. Thou art, no doubt, fatigued after so long a journey; thou shalt walk no further." He immediately took the little creature into his arms, and carried it back to the flock.

The Almighty Father of Mercies—*He* who diffused those precious drops of pity and kindness over the human heart, approved of the deed; and a heavenly voice was heard to exclaim, "Moses! Benevolent Moses! If a dumb

animal thus excite thy compassion, how much more will the children of men! What wilt thou not do for thine own brethren! Come, henceforth thou shalt be the shepherd of my chosen flock, and teach them, by thy example, '*that the Lord is good to all, and that his mercies are over all his works.*'"

Exodus Rabba, § II.

The Value of a Good Wife

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.—Proverbs xxxi. 10.

Such a treasure had the celebrated teacher, Rabbi Meir, found. He sat during the whole of one Sabbath day in the public school, and instructed the people. During his absence from his house, his two sons, both of them of uncommon beauty and enlightened in the law, died. His wife bore them to her bed-chamber, laid them upon the marriage-bed, and spread a white covering over their bodies. Towards evening, Rabbi Meir came home. "Where are my beloved sons," he asked, "that I may give them my blessing?" "They are gone to the school," was the answer. "I repeatedly looked round the school," he replied, "and I did not see them there." She reached him a goblet; he praised the Lord at the going out of the Sabbath, drank, and again asked, "Where are

my sons, that they may drink of the cup of blessing?" "They will not be far off," she said, and placed food before him, that he might eat. He was in a gladsome and genial mood, and when he had said grace after the meal, she thus addressed him:—"Rabbi, with thy permission, I would fain propose to thee one question." "Ask it, then, my love!" he replied. "A few days ago, a person entrusted some jewels to my custody, and now he demands them again: should I give them back again?" "This is a question," said Rabbi Meir, "which my wife should not have thought it necessary to ask. What! wouldst thou hesitate or be reluctant to restore to every one his own?" "No," she replied, "but yet I thought it best not to restore them without acquainting thee therewith." She then led him to their chamber, and, stepping to the bed, took the white covering from their bodies. "Ah, my sons! my sons!" thus loudly lamented the father: "My sons! the light of mine eyes, and the light of my understanding; I was your father, but ye were my teachers in the law!" The mother turned away, and wept bitterly. At length, she took her husband by the hand, and said, "Rabbi, didst thou not teach me that we must not be reluctant to restore that which was entrusted to our keeping? See, the Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, and blessed be the

name of the Lord!" "Blessed be the name of the Lord!" echoed Rabbi Meir, and blessed be his name for thy sake, too! for well is it written, 'He that has found a virtuous woman, has a greater treasure than costly pearls. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the instruction of kindness.'"

Yalkut to Proverbs, XXXI; § 964.

The Lord Helpeth Man and Beast

The Lord helpeth man and beast.—Psalm xxxvi. 6.

During his march to conquer the world, Alexander, the Macedonian, came to a people in Africa who dwelt in a remote and secluded corner, in peaceful huts, and knew neither war nor conqueror. They led him to the hut of their chief, who received him hospitably, and placed before him golden dates, golden figs, and bread of gold. "Do you eat gold in this country?" said Alexander. "I take it for granted," replied the chief, "that thou wert able to find eatable food in thine own country. For what reason, then, art thou come amongst us?" "Your gold has not tempted me hither," said Alexander, "but I would become acquainted with your manners and customs." "So be it," rejoined the other: "sojourn among us as long as it pleaseth thee." At the close of this con-

versation, two citizens entered, as into their court of justice. The plaintiff said, "I bought of this man a piece of land, and as I was making a deep drain through it, I found a treasure. This is not mine, for I only bargained for the land, and not for any treasure that might be concealed beneath it; and yet the former owner of the land will not receive it." The defendant answered, "I hope I have a conscience, as well as my fellow citizen. I sold him the land with all its contingent, as well as existing advantages, and consequently, the treasure inclusively."

The chief, who was at the same time their supreme judge, recapitulated their words, in order that the parties might see whether or not he understood them aright. Then, after some reflection, said: "Thou hast a son, friend, I believe?" "Yes." "And thou," addressing the other, "a daughter?" "Yes." "Well, then, let thy son marry *thy* daughter, and bestow the treasure on the young couple for a marriage portion."

Alexander seemed surprised and perplexed. "Think you my sentence unjust?" the chief asked him. "Oh, no!" replied Alexander; "but it astonishes me." "And how, then," rejoined the chief, "would the case have been decided in your country?" "To confess the truth," said Alexander, "we should have taken

both parties into custody, and have seized the treasure for the king's use." "For the king's use!" exclaimed the chief; "does the sun shine on that country?" "Oh, yes!" "Does it rain there?" "Assuredly." "Wonderful! But are there tame animals in the country, that live on the grass and green herbs?" "Very many, and of many kinds." "Ay, that must, then, be the cause," said the chief: "for the sake of those innocent animals the All-gracious Being continues to let the sun shine, and the rain drop down on your own country; since its inhabitants are unworthy of such blessings."

Tamid, 32a; Yerush. Baba Mezia, II, 8c; Genesis Rabba, § XXXIII; Pesikta d. R. K., IX, p. 74b–75a (ed. Buber); Leviticus Rabba, § XXVII; Tanhuma, Emor, 9.

Conversation of a Philosopher with a Rabbi

"YOUR God in His Book calls himself a jealous God, who can endure no other God beside himself, and on all occasions makes manifest his abhorrence of idolatry. How comes it, then, that he threatens and seems to hate the worshippers of false gods more than the false gods themselves?" "A certain king," replied the Rabbi, "had a disobedient son. Among other worthless tricks of various

kinds, he had the baseness to give to his dogs his father's name and titles. Should the king show his anger on the prince, or the dogs?" "Well turned," replied the philosopher: "but if your God destroyed the objects of idolatry, he would take away the temptation to it." "Yea," retorted the Rabbi, "if the fools worshipped such things only as were of no further use than that to which their folly applied them,—if the idols were always as worthless as the idolatry is contemptible. But they worship the sun, the moon, the host of heaven, the rivers, the sea, fire, air, and what not. Would you that the Creator, for the sake of these fools, should ruin his own works, and disturb the laws appointed to nature by his own wisdom? If a man steals grain and sows it, should the seed not shoot up out of the earth, because it was stolen? Oh, no! the wise Creator lets nature run her own course; for her course is his own appointment. And what if the children of folly abuse it to evil? The day of reckoning is not far off, and men will then learn that human actions likewise reappear in their consequences, by as certain a law as the green blade rises up out of the buried corn-seed."

'Abodah Zarah, 54b.

The Princess and Rabbi Joshua

Rabbi Joshua, the son of Hananiah, was one of those men whose minds are far more beautiful than their bodies. He was so dark that people often took him for a blacksmith, and so plain as almost to frighten children. Yet his great learning, wit, and wisdom had procured him not only the love and respect of the people, but even the favor of the Emperor Trajan. Being often at court, one of the Princesses rallied him on his want of beauty. "*How comes it,*" said she, "*that such glorious wisdom is enclosed in so mean a vessel?*" The Rabbi, no ways dismayed, requested her to tell him in what sort of vessels her father kept his wine. "Why, in earthen vessels, to be sure," replied the Princess. "Oh!" exclaimed the witty Rabbi, "this is the way that ordinary people do; an Emperor's wine ought to be kept in more precious vessels." The Princess, thinking him in earnest, ordered a quantity of wine to be emptied out of the earthen jars into gold and silver vessels; but, to her great surprise, found it, in a very short time, sour, and unfit to drink. "Very fine advice, indeed, Joshua, hast thou given me!" said the Princess, the next time she saw him; "do you know the wine is sour and spoiled?" "Thou art then con-

vinced," said the Rabbi, "that wine keeps best in plain and mean vessels. It is even so with wisdom." "But," continued the princess, "I know many persons who are both wise and handsome." "True," replied the Sage, "but they would, most probably, be still wiser were they less handsome."

Ta'anit, 7a; Nedarim, 50b.

Mercy in Judgment—A Parable of Rabbi Jochanan

Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth.—Proverbs xxiv. 17.

Rabbi Jochanan relates, that whilst the Egyptians were drowning in the Red Sea, the angels wished to chant the song of praise; but God rebuked them, saying—"What! the works of my hand are perishing, and ye wish to sing!"

Megillah, 10b.

This fully agrees with the character of God, as given in various parts of Scripture; where he is represented as the God of mercy, who wishes not the destruction of the wicked, but their repentance. When, therefore, the wickedness of men calls down just punishment upon their guilty heads, it ought to serve as a warning, but not as a matter of joy.

Blessings in Disguise—An Episode in the Life of R. Akiba

All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.—Psalm xxv. 10.

Compelled, by violent persecution, to quit his native land, Rabbi Akiba wandered over barren wastes and dreary deserts. His whole equipage consisted of a lamp, which he used to light at night, in order to study the law; a cock, which served him instead of a watch, to announce to him the rising dawn; and an ass on which he rode.

The sun was gradually sinking beneath the horizon, night was fast approaching, and the poor wanderer knew not where to shelter his head, or where to rest his weary limbs. Fatigued and almost exhausted, he came at last near a village. He was glad to find it inhabited; thinking where human beings dwelt, there dwelt also humanity and compassion; but he was mistaken. He asked for a night's lodging —it was refused. Not one of the inhospitable inhabitants would accommodate him. He was, therefore, obliged to seek shelter in a neighboring wood. "It is hard, very hard," said he, "not to find a hospitable roof to protect me against the inclemency of the weather; —*but God is just, and whatsoever He does is for*

the best." He seated himself beneath a tree, lighted his lamp, and began to read the *Law.* He had scarcely read a chapter, when a violent storm extinguished the light. "What," exclaimed he, "must I not be permitted even to pursue my favorite study!—*But God is just, and whatever He does is for the best.*"

He stretched himself on the bare earth, willing, if possible, to have a few hours' sleep. He had hardly closed his eyes, when a fierce wolf came and killed the cock. "What new misfortune is this?" ejaculated the astonished Akiba. "My vigilant companion is gone! Who, then, will henceforth awaken me to the study of the law? But God is just; He knows best what is good for us poor mortals." Scarcely had he finished the sentence, when a terrible lion came and devoured the ass. "What is to be done now?" exclaimed the lonely wanderer. "My lamp and my cock are gone—my poor ass, too, is gone—all is gone! But, *praised be the Lord, whatever He does is for the best!*" He passed a sleepless night, and early in the morning went to the village to see whether he could procure a horse, or any other beast of burden, to enable him to pursue his journey. But what was his surprise not to find a single individual alive!

It appears that a band of robbers had entered the village during the night, killed its

inhabitants, and plundered their houses. As soon as Akiba had sufficiently recovered from the amazement into which this wonderful occurrence had thrown him, he lifted up his voice, and exclaimed: "Thou, great God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now I know by experience that poor mortal men are short-sighted and blind; often considering as evils what is intended for their preservation! But thou alone art just, and kind, and merciful! Had not the hard-hearted people driven me, by their inhospitality, from the village, I should assuredly have shared their fate. Had not the wind extinguished my lamp, the robbers would have been drawn to the spot, and have murdered me. I perceive, also, that it was Thy mercy which deprived me of my two companions, that they might not, by their noise, give notice to the banditti where I was. Praised, then, be thy name, for ever and ever!"

Berakot, 60b.

Intended Divorce and Reconciliation

Every wise woman buildeth her house, &c.—Prov. xiv. 1.

A CERTAIN Israelite of Sidon, having been married above ten years without being blessed with offspring, determined to be divorced from his wife. With this view he brought her be-

fore Rabbi Simeon, son of Yochai. The Rabbi, who was unfavorable to divorces, endeavored at first to dissuade him from it. Seeing him, however, disinclined to accept his advice, he addressed him and his wife thus:—"My children, when you were first joined in the holy bands of wedlock, were ye not rejoiced? Did ye not make a feast and entertain your friends? Now, since ye are resolved to be divorced, let your separation be like your union. Go home, make a feast, entertain your friends, and on the morrow come to me, and I will comply with your wishes." So reasonable a request, and coming from such authority, could not, with any degree of propriety, be rejected. They accordingly went home, prepared a sumptuous entertainment, to which they invited their several friends. During the hours of merriment, the husband being elated with wine, thus addressed his wife:—"My beloved, we have lived together happily these many, many years; it is only for the want of children which makes me wish for a separation. To convince thee, however, that I bear thee no ill-will, I give thee permission to take with thee out of my house, anything thou likest best." "Be it so," rejoined the woman. The cup went round, the people were merry; and having drunk rather freely, most of the guests fell asleep; and among them the master of the

feast. The lady no sooner perceived it, than she ordered him to be carried to her father's house, and to be put into a bed prepared for the purpose. The fumes of the wine having gradually evaporated, the man awoke. Finding himself in a strange place, he wondered and exclaimed, "Where am I? How came I here? What means all this?" His wife, who had waited to see the issue of her stratagem, stepped from behind a curtain, and begging him not to be alarmed, told him that he was now in her father's house. "In thy father's house!" exclaimed the still astonished husband; "how should I come in thy father's house?" "Be patient, my dear husband," replied the prudent woman; "be patient, and I will tell thee all. Recollect, didst thou not tell me last night, I might take out of thy house whatever I valued most? Now, believe me, my beloved, among all thy treasures there is not one I value so much as I do thee; nay, there is not a treasure in this world I esteem so much as I do thee." The husband, overcome by so much kindness, embraced her, was reconciled to her, and they lived thenceforth very happily together.

Midrash Rabba to Canticles, I, 4. Pesikta de R. K., XXII, p. 147a (ed. Buber).

The Heavenly Lamp

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.—Prov. xx. 27.

RABBI TANHUM was once asked, whether it was allowable to extinguish a candle on the Sabbath, in case it incommoded a sick person. "What a question you ask!" replied the Rabbi. "True, you call a burning candle, a light, so is the soul of man; nay, it is called 'a heavenly light.' Is it not better to extinguish an earthly light, than a heavenly light?"

Shabbat, 30a.

True Charity Knows no Law—Illustrated by a Tale of Rabbi Tanchuma

And rend your hearts and not your garments.—Joel ii. 13.

IN the days of Rabbi Tanchuma, when, in consequence of a great drought, a fast had been proclaimed, the people fasted several days, but no rain came. The Rabbi then addressed them thus:—"My children," said he, "if you wish your fast to be acceptable to God, let it be accompanied by acts of charity and good-will." The people opened their purses, and distributed money to the poor and needy.

While thus laudably employed, they perceived a man give some money to a poor

woman who had formerly been his wife, but was then divorced from him. Now, as the traditional law interdicted every familiar intercourse between the parties after a separation had once taken place, the people foolishly imagined that such interdiction extended even to acts of charity; and, with ignorant, but vehement zeal, exclaimed, "*Rabbi! Rabbi!* what, do we sit idle spectators, and here is a great sin committed?" They then told him what they had observed. The good Rabbi, who wished to remove so destructive a prejudice from their minds, called the supposed offender before him, and questioned him about his motive. "Master," said the charitable Israelite, "it is true, I gave this poor woman some money. I saw her great distress, and my heart was filled with compassion." The virtuous Rabbi not only did not blame this action, but greatly admired it; and in order to impress on the minds of his hearers that true charity knows no limits, no bounds, no distinction, took care to incorporate this very deed in a prayer which he addressed to the Almighty:—"Lord of all worlds," exclaimed the pious Rabbi, "if the distress of this woman, who had no claim on the bounty of him that relieved her, excited his compassion, *we*, who are the works of thine own hands, the children of thy dearly beloved Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob, what relief may we not expect from Thee, *thou Father of Mercies!*" God heard his prayers; there came plenty of rain, the earth was fertilized, and the distressed people relieved.

Genesis Rabba, § XXXIII; Leviticus Rabba, § XXXIV.

Scripture Impartiality Vindicated by Rabbi Jose

"THE author of the books you call holy," said a certain Roman matron to Rabbi Jose, "appears to me very partial in his accounts of past events: nay, some of them appear incredible. Is it possible that Joseph, a poor and wretched slave, and in the very prime of youth, could have resisted the repeated solicitations and the alluring charms of his rich, powerful, and enamoured mistress?" "Thou wouldst not have spoken thus," replied Jose, "hadst thou read the books, of which thou appearest to have some knowledge, with due attention." He then reminded her of the narratives of *Reuben* and *Bilhah*, *Judah* and *Tamar*. "These persons," continued the Rabbi, "were superior to Joseph in age and in dignity, yet the divine Historian did not conceal their faults, but laid them open to the view of their descendants." It is the peculiar characteristic of our holy books to represent the actions

of our ancestors with faithfulness and impartiality; neither palliating their vices, nor exaggerating their virtues; that posterity might avoid the former, and imitate the latter.

Genesis Rabba, § LXXXVII.

The Honor Due to Whatever is Truly Useful

Rabbi Huna once asked his son Raba, why he did not attend the lectures of Rabbi Hisda. "Because," replied the son, "he only treats of temporal and worldly concerns." "What," said the father, "he occupies himself with that which is necessary for the preservation of human beings *—and this you call worldly affairs! Trust me, this is among the most estimable of studies."

Shabbat, 82a.

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* Hisda's Discourse, of which the young man spoke so lightly, happened to be on medicinal subjects.

To Insult Poverty or Natural Defect, no Venial Crime

Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker.—Prov. xvii. 4.

Despise not the poor, thou knowest not how soon it may be thine own lot.

Despise not the deformed, their defects are not of their own seeking, and why shouldst thou add insult to misfortune?

Despise no creature; the most insignificant is the work of thy Maker.

Rabbi Simeon, the son of Eleazar, returning from his master's residence to his native place, was highly elated with the great knowledge he had acquired. On his way, he overtook a singularly unshapely and misfeatured person, who was travelling to the same town. The stranger saluted him by saying,—"Peace be upon thee, Rabbi." Simeon, proud of his learning, instead of returning the civility, noticed only the traveller's deformity; and by way of joke, said to him,—"Racca,* are the inhabitants of thy town all as misshapen as thou art?" The stranger, astonished at Simeon's want of manners, and provoked by the insult, replied—"I do not know; but thou hadst better make these inquiries of the great Artist that made me." The Rabbi perceived

* A term of reproach.

his error, and alighting from the animal on which he rode, threw himself at the stranger's feet, and entreated him to pardon a fault committed in the wantonness of his heart, and which he most sincerely regretted. "No," said the stranger, "*go first to the Artist that made me, and tell him, Great Artist, O ! what an ugly vessel thou hast produced !*" Simeon continued his entreaties; the stranger persisted in his refusal. In the mean time they arrived at the Rabbi's native city. The inhabitants being apprised of his arrival, came in crowds to meet him, exclaiming—"Peace be upon thee, Rabbi! Welcome, our Instructor!" "Whom do ye call Rabbi?" asked the stranger. The people pointed to Simeon. "And him ye honor with the name of Rabbi!" continued the poor man; "O! may Israel not produce many like him!" He then related what had happened. "He has done wrong; he is aware of it," said the people; "do forgive him; for he is a great man, well-versed in the Law." The stranger then forgave him, and intimated that his long refusal had no other object than that of impressing the impropriety on the Rabbi's mind. The learned Simeon thanked him; and whilst he held out his own conduct as a warning to the people, he justified that of the stranger, by saying—"That though a person ought ever to be as flexible as a reed, and not as stubborn as

a cedar, yet to insult poverty or natural defect is no venial crime; and one that we cannot expect to be readily pardoned."

Ta'anit, 20a–b.

Liberality Grounded on Religion not to be Conquered by Reverse of Fortune—Exemplified in Abba Judan

A man's gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before the great men.—Prov. xviii. 16.

Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Joshua, and Rabbi Akiba travelled about annually in the land of Israel, to collect money for the poor. Among their many and various contributors, none gave more liberally, nor with more cheerfulness, than Abba Judan, who was then in very affluent circumstances. Fortune, however, took a turn. A dreadful storm destroyed the fruits of his grounds; a raging pestilence swept away the greater part of his flocks and herds; and his extensive fields and vineyards became the prey of his greedy and inexorable creditors. Of all his vast possessions, nothing was left him but one small plot of ground. Such a sudden reverse of fortune was enough to depress any ordinary mind. But Abba Judan, on whose heart the Divine precepts of his holy religion had been early and deeply imprinted,

patiently submitted to his lot. "The Lord," said he, "gave and the Lord hath taken away; —let his name be praised for ever." He diligently applied to cultivate the only field he had left, and by dint of great labor, and still greater frugality, he contrived to support himself and family decently; and was, notwithstanding his poverty, cheerful and contented. The year passed on. One evening, as he was sitting at the door of his miserable hut, to rest from the labors of the day, he perceived the Rabbis coming at a distance. It was then that his former greatness and his present deplorable condition at once rushed upon his mind; and he felt for the first time the pangs of poverty. "What was Abba Judan!" exclaimed he; "and what is he now?" Pensive and melancholy, he seated himself in the corner of his hut. His wife perceived the sudden change. "What ails my beloved?" asked she tenderly; "art thou not well?—tell me, that I may administer to thy relief." "Would to God it were in thy power—but the Lord alone can heal the wounds which he inflicts," replied the distressed man. "Dost thou not remember the days of our prosperity, when our corn fed the hungry—our fleece clothed the naked—and our oil and wine refreshed the drooping spirit of the afflicted? The orphans came round us and blessed us—and the widow's heart sang

for joy. Then did we taste those heavenly pleasures which are the lot of the good and charitable. But now, alas! we cannot relieve the fatherless, nor him who wants help; we are ourselves poor and wretched. Seest thou not yonder good men coming to make the charitable collection? They will call—but what have we to give them?" "Do not repine, dear husband," rejoined his virtuous wife, "we have still one field left; suppose we sell half of it, and give the money for the use of the poor?" A beam of joy overspread the good man's countenance. He followed his wife's advice, sold half the field, and when the collectors called, he gave them the money. They accepted it, and as they departed, said to him: "May the Lord restore thee to thy former prosperity!" Abba Judan resumed his former spirits, and with it his wonted diligence. He went to plough the small spot of ground still left him. As he was pursuing his work, the foot of the ox that drew the ploughshare sunk into the ground, and the beast was maimed. In endeavoring to relieve the animal from its perilous situation, he saw something glittering in the hollow which the foot had made. This excited his attention; he dug the hole deeper, and, to his great astonishment and no less joy, found an immense treasure concealed in the very spot. He took it home, removed from the

wretched hovel in which he lived, into a very fine house; repurchased the lands and possessions which his ancestors had left him, and which his former distress had obliged him to sell; and added greatly to them. Nor did he neglect the poor. He again became a father to the fatherless, and a blessing to the unfortunate. The time arrived, when the before-mentioned Rabbis came, as usual, to make their collection. Not finding their generous contributor in the place where he had resided the year before, they addressed themselves to some of the inhabitants of the village, and asked them whether they could tell them what had become of Abba Judan, and how he was. "Abba Judan!" exclaimed they, "the good and generous Abba Judan! who is like him in riches, charity, and goodness?—See you yonder flocks and herds? they belong to Abba Judan. Those vast fields, flourishing vineyards, and beautiful gardens? they belong to Abba Judan. Those fine buildings? they also belong to Abba Judan." Whilst they were thus discoursing, the good man happened to pass that way. The wise men greeted him, and asked him how he did. "Masters," said he, "your prayers have produced plenty of fruit,—come to my house and partake of it. I will make up the deficiency of last year's subscription." They followed him to his house, where, after

entertaining them nobly, he gave them a very handsome present for the poor. They accepted it, and taking out the subscription list of the preceding year—"See," said they to him, "though many exceeded thee in their donations, yet we have placed thee at the very top of the list, convinced that the smallness of thy gift at that time arose from want of means—not from want of inclination. It is to men like thou art that the wise king alluded, when he said: 'A man's gift maketh room for him and bringeth him before the great men.'"

Yerushalmi Horayot, III, 48a; Leviticus Rabba, § V; Deuteronomy Rabba, § IV.

On Pretended Majorities

"It is declared in your law," said a heathen once to Rabbi Joshua, the son of Karha, "that in matters where unanimity cannot be obtained, you ought to follow the majority; and you allow that we heathen are more numerous than you are; then why do you not follow our mode of worship?" "Before I answer thy interrogation," replied the Rabbi, "permit me to ask thee a question: Hast thou any children?" "Alas!" exclaimed the heathen, "thou remindest me of the greatest of my troubles."

"Why, what is the matter?" asked Joshua. "I will tell thee," replied the heathen: "I have many sons; generally speaking, they live pretty peaceably together; but when meal-time arrives, and prayers are to commence, each wishes to adore his god in his own way. One invokes Jupiter, another Mars, another Neptune. Each extols him whom he wishes to adore, and insists on his superiority. From words they often come to blows; so that instead of having a comfortable meal, we have nothing but confusion and quarrels." "And why dost thou not endeavor to reconcile them?" asked Joshua. "I might as well," said the heathen, "attempt to reconcile fire and water, or to smoothen the turbulent waves of the ocean." "I truly pity thee," said the Rabbi; "thy neighbors are, perhaps, more fortunate?" "Not at all," replied the heathen, "unless they be childless:—otherwise the same cause produces the same effect." "And yet," exclaimed Joshua, "thou callest this a majority—whose worship thou fain wouldst recommend to us! Be advised by me, good man, and before thou attemptest to reconcile others to such a mode of worship, first reconcile the worshippers amongst themselves."

Leviticus Rabba, § IV, at the end.

On the Mood of Mind that will Render the Consequences of Improper Actions the Atonement for Them

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. —Prov. iii. 11, 12.

Few men pass through life without meeting with many and various calamities. Under such circumstances, it behooves us to bear affliction with fortitude, and to resign ourselves to the will of God, who corrects as a kind father does his children, not with a view of inflicting pain, but for the purpose of amendment. This is what the royal moralist inculcated, and which Rabbi Nahum confirmed by his own conduct, under the severest sufferings.

It is related of this pious man * that he was blind and lame, unable to use his hands, his whole body was distempered, and his feet were so sore that they were obliged to be immersed in a large basin of water, to keep off the insects. The house he lived in was in so ruinous a state that his disciples, fearing lest it should tumble

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* He was surnamed Gamzu, which signifies, *this also;* because, whatever happened to him, he used to say, *this is also for some good purpose.*

over their master's head, wished to remove him to another dwelling. "Remove the furniture first," said the afflicted man; "then remove me; for I am confident the house will not give way as long as I remain in it." They did so; and no sooner had they removed the patient, when the house fell in, and became a complete ruin. "Since thou art so good a man as to be worthy of the special protection of Providence," said his disciples, "how comes it that thou art thus afflicted?" "I will tell you, my children," replied their pious instructor. "I once went to pay a visit to my father-in-law; I took with me, as a present, three asses; one laden with various sorts of eatables, one with wine, and the third with various sorts of sweetmeats. Arriving not far from the place of my destination, a poor man, wretched, and almost starved, accosted me. 'Master,' cried he, 'Oh! relieve my distress.' 'Wait,' answered I, 'until I have unloaded the asses.' This took up some time; and scarcely had I finished unloading the animals, when the poor man dropped down dead before me. My conscience began to upbraid me. 'Poor lamented man,' said I, 'a little more promptness might have saved thee; my inconsiderate delay has killed thee!' I then threw myself on his dead body, and exclaimed: 'Oh! ye eyes that could, but would not, look at the distress of the poor man, may ye be de-

prived of the light of day. Ye hands that would not reach him timely relief, Oh! may ye have no more your wonted use. Ye legs that did not quickly run to his assistance, may ye no more be able to perform your usual office. May this body, too, which did not feel compassion for the wretchedness and misery of that lifeless body, feel the affliction it would not relieve.' As I said, so it happened. This, then, is the cause of my misery." The disciples, moved by this sad recital, but still more by their master's dreadful sufferings, exclaimed: "Woe be to us, to see thee in a condition so deplorable!" "It would be much worse for me," replied their heroic instructor, "were you not to see me in this condition." Intimating that he willingly endured his present sufferings, as an atonement for his former sins, in the hope of enjoying, in the next world, that bliss which is reserved for the good and the righteous.

Ta'anit, 21a.

The Seven Ages

THERE are few persons who have not read Shakspeare's beautiful description of the Seven Ages of Man. An ancient Hebrew sage has given us his thoughts on the same subject. His language may not appear so elegant as

that of the inimitable bard, but his sentiments are equally just, and certainly more edifying.

Seven times in one verse (said Rabbi Simon, the son of Eliezer) did the author of Ecclesiastes make use of the word *vanity*,* in allusion to the seven stages of human life.

The first commences in the first year of human existence, when the *infant* lies like a king on a soft couch, with numerous attendants about him—all ready to serve him, and eager to testify their love and attachment by kisses and embraces.

The second commences about the age of two or three years, when the darling *child* is permitted to crawl on the ground and, like an unclean animal, delights in dirt and filth.

Then, at the age of ten, the thoughtless *boy*, without reflecting on the past, or caring for the future, jumps and skips about like a young kid on the enamelled green, contented to enjoy the present moment.

The fourth stage begins about the age of twenty, when the *young man*, full of vanity and pride, begins to set off his person by dress; and, like a young, unbroken horse, prances and gallops about in search of a wife.

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* Eccles. i. 2.—The word occurs twice in the plural, which the Rabbi considered as equivalent to four, and three times in the singular, making together *seven*.

Then comes the *matrimonial state*, when the poor *man*, like the patient ass, is obliged, however reluctantly, to toil and labor for a living.

Behold him now in the *parental state*, when, surrounded by helpless children craving his support, and looking to him for bread, he is as bold, as vigilant—and as fawning, too—as the faithful dog; guarding his little flock, and snatching at everything that comes in his way, in order to provide for his offspring.

At last comes the *final stage*, when the decrepit *old man*, like the unwieldy though sagacious *elephant*, becomes grave, sedate, and distrustful. He then, also, begins to hang down his head toward the ground, as if surveying the place where all his vast schemes must terminate, and where ambition and vanity are finally humbled to the dust.

Ecclesiastes Rabba I, 2; Yalkut to Eccles. I, 2; Midrash Tanhuma, § Pikude; Midrash ha-Gadol to Genes. ii. 2 (ed. Schechter, pp. 60–61); cp. also Seder Yezirat ha-Velad, in Jellinek's Beth Hamidrash, I, 154–155, and the parallels cited by G. A. Kohut, in "Jewish Encyclopedia," I, pp. 233–235.

Incorruptible Treasures

In the way of righteousness there is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.—Prov. xii. 28.

During the reign of king Monobaz, there happened to be a most grievous famine. The people had parted with their all, and were in the utmost distress. The king, touched by their affliction, ordered his minister to expend the treasures which he and his ancestors had amassed, in the purchase of corn and other necessaries of life, and to distribute them among the poor and needy. The king's brothers, who were not of a very generous disposition, grieved to see such vast sums of money expended, reproached him with want of economy. "Thy forefathers," said they, "took care to add to the treasures which their ancestors had left them, but thou—thou not only dost not add, but dost squander what they have left thee." "You are mistaken, my dear brethren," replied the virtuous and generous king; "I, too, preserve treasures, as my ancestors did before me. The only difference is this:—they preserved earthly, but I, heavenly treasures. They placed theirs where any one might lay hold of them—mine are preserved in a place where no human hand can touch them. What they preserved yielded no fruit; that which I

preserve will yield fruit in abundance. They preserved, indeed, gold and silver; but I have preserved *lives*. What they amassed was for others; what I amass is for my own use:—in short, they treasured up things useful for this world—my treasures will be useful in the next world."

Baba Batra, 11a; Yerushalmi Peah, I, 1; Tosefta Peah, § IV.

Table Talk of the Sages of Israel

When the son of Gamaliel was married, Rabbi Eliezer, Joshua, and Zadoc were invited to the marriage feast. Gamaliel, though one of the most distinguished men among the Israelites, waited himself on his guests; and, pouring out a cup of wine, handed it to Eliezer, who politely refused it. Gamaliel then handed it to Joshua. The latter accepted it. "How is this, friend Joshua?" said Eliezer, "shall we sit, and permit so great a man to wait on us?" "Why not?" replied Joshua; "a man even greater than he did so long before him. Was not our father, Abraham, a very great man?—yet, even he waited upon his guests, as it is written—*And he* (Abraham) *stood by them whilst they were eating*. Perhaps you may think he did so, because he knew them to be angels;—no such thing. He supposed them to be

Arabian travellers, else he would neither have offered them water to wash their feet, nor viands to allay their hunger. Why, then, shall we prevent our kind host from imitating so excellent an example?" "I know," exclaimed Rabbi Zadoc, "a being still greater than Abraham, who doth the same." "Indeed," continued he, "how long shall we be engaged in reciting the praises of created beings, and neglect the glory of the Creator! Even He, blessed be His name, causes the winds to blow, the clouds to accumulate, and the rain to descend: He fertilizes the earth, and daily prepares a magnificent table for His creatures. Why, then, shall we hinder our kind host, Gamaliel, from following so glorious an example?"

Kiddushin, 32 b; Sifre to Deuteronomy, ch. xxxviii.

Destruction of Wickedness, the Best Way of Destroying Wicked Men

She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness.—Prov. xxxi. 26.

Rabbi Meir had some very troublesome neighbors, who took the greatest delight in doing him every mischief in their power. Vexed with their outrageous conduct, he prayed that God might destroy them. His wife heard him:

"Dear husband," said she, "would it not be better to pray for their reform? Recollect that king David did not pray for the destruction of *sinners*, but of *sin*, as it is written, '*Let sin be consumed out of the earth, and the wicked will be no more.*' (Psalm civ. 35.) Pray, then, for their repentance, not for their destruction." The good Rabbi approved of the advice of his wife, and thenceforth prayed that God might enlighten the minds of his troublesome neighbors, and reform their hearts.

Berakot, 10a.

The Meek and the Haughty. The Contrast Exemplified in the Conduct of Shammai and Hillel

Austerity of manners and harshness of disposition are the graceless offspring of pride and arrogance. Like a chilling frost they repel and contract whatever comes near them; and, like a dark cloud, they obscure and deform the most shining talents and the greatest learning; whereas, humility and meekness are the lovely children of humanity and benevolence. Like the mild rays of the sun, they warm and expand whatever comes within the circle of their influence. They sweetly allure the hearts of men, throw a splendor on the most humble,

and are the best ornaments of the truly great.

The truth of these maxims we find fully exemplified in the conduct of two Hebrew sages, who flourished in the time of *Herod* (misnamed) the Great. Shammai, though a man of great learning, was of a morose temper. Hillel, in addition to his great knowledge, possessed the virtues of humility and meekness, in an eminent degree. It happened that a heathen came to the former, and thus addressed him:—"I wish to become a proselyte, on condition that thou dost teach me the whole law, while I stand upon one leg." The morose teacher, offended at so unreasonable a request, pushed the applicant away, with the staff he held in his hand. The heathen went to Hillel, and made the same application. The amiable instructor complied with his request, and told him—"*Remember, whatever thou dislikest thyself, do not unto thy neighbors.* This is the substance of the law; everything else is but its comment: now go and learn." The heathen thanked him, and became a good and pious man.

Shabbat, 31a; Abot de-Rabbi Natan, recension B, ch. XXVI (ed. Schechter, p. 53).

Another Example; or, the Heathen and the Hebrew Sages

It happened at another time, that a heathen passing a synagogue, heard the *Sofer* (clerk) read the following words:—"*And these are the garments which they shall make: a breast-plate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a broidered coat, a mitre, and a girdle,*" etc. (Exod. xxviii. 4.) The heathen asked for whom all these fine garments were intended. "For the high-priest," was the answer. As soon as the heathen heard this, he went to Shammai, and said, "Master, I wish to become a proselyte, but on condition that I be made a high-priest." Shammai drove him away with contempt. He applied to Hillel, and made the same request. This mild instructor of Israel received him courteously, and thus addressed him:—"Friend, hast thou ever known a king to be elected without being first instructed in the rules of government? Whoever wishes to be high-priest must first be made acquainted with the rules belonging to so dignified an office. Come, then, and learn." He then taught him the 18th chapter of Numbers. When they came to the 7th verse, which says, "*And the* Stranger *that cometh nigh shall be put to death,*" the heathen asked who was meant by the *stranger*. "It

applies," answered Hillel, "to any one who is not a descendant of Aaron. Even David, the king of Israel, if he had presumed to administer this sacred function, would have been punishable with death." The man then reasoned with himself—"If thus the greatest of Israel is not thought worthy to fill this office, how should I, a poor, miserable stranger?" He gave up the desire of becoming a high-priest; but, by continuing to study the law, became an adopted member of that nation to whom God said, "*Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests*," etc. (Exodus xix. 6.)

In the course of time, they all three happened to meet together, when the grateful proselyte thus expressed himself:—"Shammai's harshness almost drove me from the world; but Hillel's humility saved me. May all the blessings rest upon thy head, thou worthy instructor of Israel! for it is thou who hast brought me under the wings of the Divine presence."

Shabbat, 31a.

The Conquest of Meekness; or, the Wager

Another example will still further prove the great meekness and patient forbearance of this truly great man.

A man laid once a wager with another, that he

would provoke Hillel to anger. The bet was four hundred *zuz*.* In order to make sure of it, he went to the house of Hillel (who, it must be recollected, was, at that time, next to the king, the most exalted of the Israelites), and, in a very turbulent manner called out, "Where is Hillel? where is Hillel?" without giving him any title of distinction. Hillel was in the act of dressing himself for the Sabbath, and, without noticing the rudeness of the stranger, put on his cloak, and, with his usual mildness, asked him what was his pleasure. "I want to know," said the man, "why the Babylonians have round heads." "An important question, truly," answered Hillel. "The reason is, because they have no *experienced midwives.*" The man went away, and came again in an hour, vociferating as before, "Where is Hillel? where is Hillel?" The Sage again threw his mantle over his shoulders, and said to him, "What dost thou want, my son?" "I want to know," said the man, "why the *Tarmudians* have weak eyes." Hillel answered, "Because they live in a sandy country; the sand flying in their eyes causes soreness." The man perceiving Hillel's mildness and good nature, went away disappointed. But, resolving to make another effort to provoke him, he came again

*A Hebrew coin, value about nine pence, being the fourth part of a shekel.

in an hour, and called out, "Where is Hillel? I want Hillel!" "What is thy pleasure now?" said the latter, mildly. "I want to know," rejoined the former, "why the Africans have broad feet." "Because," said Hillel, "they live in a marshy land." "I fain would ask thee many more questions," said the man, "but fear thou wilt be angry." "Fear nothing," said the meek instructor of Israel; "ask as many questions as it pleases thee; and I will answer them if I can." The man, astonished at Hillel's unruffled temper and fearing to lose his money, thought that the only chance left was, to insult him to his face; and with this view said to him, "Art thou the Hillel who is styled the Prince of the Israelites?" Hillel answered in the affirmative. "Well, then," said the man, "if so, may Israel not produce many persons like thee!" "And why?" asked the sweet-natured Hillel. "Because," replied the stranger—"because through thee I have lost four hundred zuz." "Thy money is not entirely lost," said Hillel, with a smile, "because it will teach thee to be more prudent for the future, and not to make such foolish wagers. Besides, it is much better that thou lose thy money, than Hillel should lose his patience."

Shabbat, 31a.

True Charity—An Anecdote of Mar Ukba

MAR UKBA was one of those chiefs of Israel, who, in addition to great learning and wisdom, was blessed with great riches; of which no one knew how to make a better use than he. Independent of his general charity, he made it a rule to give annually to a number of poor men a certain sum, sufficient to maintain them comfortably. Among these, there was one to whom he used to give four hundred crowns on the day preceding the day of Atonement. It happened once that he sent this gift by his son, who, on his return, represented to his father that he was bestowing his charity on very unworthy objects. "Why, what is the matter?" asked Mar Ukba. "I have," replied the son, "seen that man, whom you think so poor, and who does not blush to live on charity—I have seen him and his family indulge themselves in great luxuries; drinking the most costly wines." "Hast thou?" replied the benevolent chief;—"then, I dare say, the unfortunate man has seen better days. Accustomed to such good living I wonder how he can come out with the small, allowance we make him. Here, take this purse with money to him; and, for the future, let his allowance be doubled."

Ketubot, 67b.

Filial Reverence. Exemplified in the Acts of Damah, the Son of Nethina

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.—Exod. xx. 12.

Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father.—Lev. xix. 3.

"Do you wish to know," said the great Rabbi Eliezer to his disciples (in answer to their inquiries, how far the honor of parents extends)—"do you wish to know how to honor your parents? then go and take example of Damah, the son of Nethina. His mother was, unfortunately, insane, and would frequently not only abuse him, but even strike him in the presence of his companions; yet would this dutiful son not suffer an ill word to excape his lips; and, all that he used to say on such occasions was, 'Enough, dear mother, enough.' Further: one of the precious stones attached to the high-priest's sacerdotal garments was once, by some means or other, lost. Informed that the son of Nethina had one like it, the priests went to him, and offered him a very large price for it. He consented to take the sum offered, and went into an adjoining room to fetch the jewel. On entering he found his father asleep; his foot resting on the chest wherein the gem was deposited. Without disturbing his father, he went

back to the priests, and told them that he must, for the present, forego the large profit he could make, as his father was asleep. The case being urgent, and the priests thinking that he only said so to obtain a larger price, offered him more money. 'No,' said the dutiful son, 'I would not even for a moment disturb my father's rest, could I obtain the treasures of the world.' The priests waited till the father awoke, when Damah brought them the jewel. They gave him the sum they offered the second time, but the good man refused to take it. 'I will not barter the satisfaction of having done my duty, for gold. Give me what you offered at first, and I shall be satisfied.' This they did, and left him with a blessing."

Kiddushin 31a; 'Abodah Zarah 23b-24a; Yerushalmi Peah, I, 1; Kiddushin, I, 7; Deuteronomy Rabba, § I; Pesikta Rabbati, § XXIII, end.

The Double Moral and Twofold Tale, from the Talmud

1.—The MANNER no inessential part of the DEED, in acts of duty and benevolence.

2.—Know the MOTIVE before thou judgest of the ACT.

"SOME men," say the Talmudists, "give their indigent parents the finest capons to eat, and yet inherit *Gehinnom*.*—Others set them

* Hell.

to grind at the mill, and inherit *Gan-Eden.*" * To illustrate the first part of this apophthegm, they relate the following:—"A certain person maintained his father, and was accustomed to provide him with the most costly viands. One day he placed before him a very fine capon. 'My son,' said the father, 'where didst thou get this fine bird?' The brute, instead of making him a proper reply, said, 'Old man! old man! eat away, chew away, as other dogs do.' Now, such a man, though he supports his parent, yet deserves to be punished. For of what use is the best of food, when it is thus mixed with gall?"

To illustrate the second part of the preceding apophthegm, they relate the following:—"A certain individual obtained his living by grinding at the mill. Notwithstanding his great poverty, he maintained his aged father, and would not suffer him to work. One day, as he was pursuing his laborious occupation, word was brought him that the king's officers were at the door, urging the people to come and do the king's work. Fearful lest his aged parent should be maltreated, he called him and said,—'Come, dear father, take my place at the mill, and let me appear as the master of the house. Should the tyrants insult, better be it that I should be insulted than my beloved father.

* Paradise.

Should they strike, I can bear the blows better than thou; and should they strip me of my clothes, let me rather go naked than my aged father.'—Now, surely, this man, although he set his father to work at the mill, will inherit Paradise."

Kiddushin, 31 a-b; Tosafot to l. c., Yerushalmi Peah, I, 1.

Compassion Toward the Unhappy : or, Rabbi Jose and His Repudiated Wife

If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink; for, though thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, the Lord shall reward thee."
—Prov. xxv. 21, 22.

Rabbi Jose, the Galilean, had the misfortune to be married to a perverse and quarrelsome woman, who not only did not pay him the respect due to his station, but would often insult him in the presence of his disciples. Seeing these repeated acts of aggression, they asked him why he did not divorce her, and thus get rid of so troublesome a companion. "Her dowry is large, and I am poor," replied their instructor; "and it would be unjust to send her away without restoring to her what she brought me." One day, the rich and learned Eliezer, the son of Azariah, paid our Rabbi a friendly visit. Rejoiced to see this great luminary of learning, and thinking himself highly honored by the

company of so great a man, he pressed him to stay and dine with him. Rabbi Eliezer consented. The ill-natured woman, who delighted to vex her husband on all occasions, turned her back on his friend, and, by unbecoming gestures, gave him to understand how little she cared either for him or his friends. Jose took no notice of her uncourteous behavior; and mildly asked her what she had for dinner.—"Nothing," replied his bad-tempered wife; "nothing but a few vegetables"; though she had actually prepared some very fine chickens for herself.—Rabbi Eliezer, who easily perceived that his friend was not blessed with the best-natured woman in the world, advised him to divorce her; and when Jose pleaded his poverty, he gave him a very large sum of money. The woman was accordingly divorced; and, after some time, married the beadle of the town. The man becoming blind, and unable to follow his usual occupation, was reduced to such poverty as to be constrained to beg his bread in the streets. His wife had the disagreeable task to lead him about from house to house, to excite the compassion of the well-disposed and charitable. In this degrading employment, she had sufficient pride left to avoid the house in which her former husband resided. The unfortunate man, though blind, was not unacquainted with the character of the inhabitants of the town. He had often

heard of Jose's piety and charity, and asked his wife why she passed that good man's house. She frequently put him off with frivolous excuses; but the question being continually repeated, she at last told him the truth: and that a sense of shame prevented her from begging at the house of which she was formerly the mistress. —The husband, being of a brutish disposition, thought this reason insufficient; insisted on being led thither; and when his wife obstinately refused it, he beat her most cruelly. She shrieked:—her lamentable cries brought a great crowd about them. The wretched woman showed her wounds. The man justified himself by stating, that his wife injured him in his calling, and recited the great losses he experienced through her obstinacy. Amidst this uproar and confusion, Jose happened accidentally to pass. He inquired for the cause; and no sooner was he informed of the real state of the affair, than he ordered the wants of those poor people to be immediately relieved, provided a house for them, and maintained them out of his own scanty income, for the rest of their lives.— "Rabbi," said his disciples to him, "is not this the same woman that formerly made thy life so miserable?" "Yea," answered their pious instructor; "and for that very reason I am bound to relieve her; for thus it is written: 'Do not shut thine eyes against thine own flesh.'"—Thus

practically teaching, that a tender connection once formed, though afterward dissolved, is never wholly forgotten by a good man; and that past misconduct is not to be recollected by us against the unhappy in the hour of their affliction.

Genesis Rabba, § XVII; Leviticus Rabba, § XXXIV; abbreviated in Yerushalmi Peah, XII, 1.

The Legacy of Rabbi Johanan to his Disciples

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.—Psal. cxi. 10.

When Rabbi Johanan, the son of Zakkai, a man no less celebrated for his great learning than his piety, was taken ill, his disciples went to visit him. They found their venerable master in his dying moments; his eyes bedewed with tears. Having often heard him descant on the vanity of this world, the immortality of the soul, and the great rewards reserved for the good and virtuous in the next world, they were very much surprised to see him in tears, as if regretting to leave this world; and therefore ventured to ask him for an explanation. "Thou light of Israel, chief pillar of the nation, and strength of the law," said they, "why dost thou weep?"—"Suppose," answered their pious instructor, "suppose I were to be conducted before the tribunal of some great king, who after all is but

flesh and blood, here to-day, to-morrow in the grave; whose anger, however vehement, cannot be eternal,—whose punishment, however severe, cannot last forever,—who might indeed kill me, but could not deprive me of a future life,—nay, perhaps I might pacify him with words, or bribe him with money or valuable presents,—notwithstanding all which, I should tremble, fear, and weep. Now I am to be conducted before the awful majesty of the *King of kings;* before the holy and blessed *God*, who is, and liveth forever. Whose just anger may be eternal,—who may doom me to everlasting punishment; and should he condemn me to death, it is a death without further hope. Nor can I pacify him with words, nor bribe him with money. Neither is this all: but there are two roads before me, one leading to paradise, the other to hell; but I know not by which of these I shall be conveyed. Have I not cause to weep?"—The disciples, although convinced of their master's piety, and the purity of his past life, yet felt the truth of his observation, and entreated him to bestow his last blessing upon them. "O! may ye," said their master, "fear God as much as one fears a mortal king, made of flesh and blood."—"Rabbi," said his disciples, "is this all, and no more?" "O!" replied the dying sage, "would it were even so! Consider, my children, how tremblingly alive men are for their reputation.

When a person commits a fault, does he not endeavor to hide it from his fellow-creature? Would any one be guilty of a crime were he certain it would be known? And what can be hidden from the all-seeing eye of God!"

Berakot, 28b; Abot de-Rabbi Natan, Recension A, ch. XXV (ed. Schechter, p. 79).

Milton's "Dark from Excess of Light." Anticipated and applied by R. Joshua, in answer to a demand of the Emperor Trajan

"You teach," said the Emperor Trajan to Rabbi Joshua, "that your God is everywhere, and boast that he resides among your nation. I should like to see him."—"God's presence is indeed everywhere," replied Joshua, "but he cannot be seen; no mortal eye can behold his glory."—The emperor insisted. "Well," said Joshua, "suppose we try to look first at one of his ambassadors?"—The emperor consented.—The Rabbi took him in the open air at noon-day, and bid him look at the sun in its meridian splendor.—"I cannot," said Trajan, "the light dazzles me."—"Thou art unable," said Joshua, "to endure the light of one of his creatures, and canst thou expect to behold the resplendent glory of the Creator? Would not such a sight annihilate thee!"

Hullin, 59b-60a.

The Wilful Drunkard

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again.—Prov. xxiii. 31–35.

The drunkard, says a learned Rabbi, first parts with his money, then with his silver vessels, saying, "Copper vessels will render me the same service." He then exchanges the copper for earthen vessels, saying, "O! they will do equally well"; and would part even with these, could he but get drink. Like all vicious habits, drunkenness clings to a man during his life, and will not leave him even on the brink of the grave.

A certain man was so addicted to drinking, that he sold even his household furniture to satisfy his depraved appetite. His sons, who had long observed their father's growing infirmity with the deepest sorrow, said, "If we permit our parent to proceed much longer at this rate, he will leave us nothing wherewith to maintain him." They employed the mildest means to dissuade him from a course so destructive and disgraceful. It was all in vain. He

continued to indulge himself as usual. Resolved to leave no method calculated to produce a reform untried, they carried him one day, whilst in a state of intoxication, to the burying-ground, and placed him in a cave, where the dead were usually deposited; flattering themselves that, on awaking from his stupor, the melancholy scenes by which he would find himself surrounded, would make him seriously reflect on his past life; that he would then abandon a habit attended with such pernicious consequences, and readily pardon them an act which, however irreverent, was solely intended for his good. With this impression they left him. On the next morning they hastened to the cave, expecting to find their parent, weak for want of food, but certainly not in a state of inebriation. Their astonishment may therefore be more easily conceived than described, when, on entering the cave, they found him sitting apparently at ease, with a flask, nearly emptied of its contents, at his mouth; whilst a number of bottles, some empty, others still full, were lying near him. They spoke to him, but could obtain no coherent answer.

It appears that some smugglers had the preceding night passed that way with a quantity of wine, which they intended to introduce into the town; but perceiving the king's officers at a distance, and fearing detection, concealed the

prohibited goods in the very cave, as a place least likely to be searched, and went on: intending to fetch them away at a convenient opportunity. In the mean time the old man slept very soundly, little dreaming of what was going forward. Early next morning he awoke, and finding himself in so melancholy a place, surrounded by the dead, and assailed by their putrid smell, he was at first greatly terrified and alarmed; but the same light which exhibited his gloomy situation, discovered to him the rich store that was deposited near him. The sight of so unexpected a treasure filled him with joy. He no longer thought of the dead, nor of the grave; but opening one bottle after the other, and emptying them of their delicious contents, he became as drunk as ever. In this situation his sons found him. Overwhelmed with grief and disappointment, they exclaimed, "Alas! all our endeavors are vain—the disease is incurable; but he is our father;—it is our duty to hide his infirmities. Let us take him home, supply him in a private chamber with as much as he can drink, that he may no longer be exposed to public scorn." This they did, convinced that ill habits, once contracted, are seldom relinquished; and that confirmed vice will not quit its unfortunate possessor, even at the brink of the grave.

Leviticus Rabba, § XII; Yalkut to Proverbs, § 960.

Do not provoke those who throw off Appearances of Justice, who are too strong to be compelled to the Reality

When the ungenerous grant a favor, it is generally clogged with so many hard conditions as to render their pretended generosity of no avail. Under such circumstances, prudence commands us to submit to our hard fate, rather than to provoke fresh insults by useless resistance.

A short time after Trajan had mounted the throne of the Roman Empire, the Israelites obtained his permission to rebuild the holy temple at Jerusalem. The Samaritans no sooner heard of it than, with their usual malignity, they represented to the Emperor the danger of permitting the Jews to assemble again in their former metropolis, where, being once more united, they would soon shake off their allegiance. Trajan, unwilling to revoke the grant, yet fearful of the consequences, was at a loss how to proceed, when one of his counsellors suggested to him a very easy method of getting rid of his embarrassment. "Order them," said this artful adviser, "to build the intended temple on a different spot; or, to make it five cubits higher or lower than its former dimensions, and you may be sure their strict adherence to the letter of the law

will not permit them to avail themselves of your favor." The emperor issued his order accordingly. This threw the people into the greatest consternation. They assembled tumultuously in the valley of Rimmon; and, while some expressed their disappointment in lamentation and tears, there were many who madly wanted to oppose the Emperor's orders by force of arms. The elders, seeing the people in such a ferment, requested Rabbi Joshua, whose wisdom and eloquence were well known, to appease them. The Rabbi obeyed their call, and in addressing the multitude, made use of the well-known apologue of the Lion and the Crane. "The lion," said the orator, "whilst devouring his prey, accidentally got a bone in his throat. After many vain endeavors to disgorge it, he caused a great reward to be proclaimed among his numerous subjects, for him who should relieve his mighty majesty from the excruciating pain. Few animals ventured to undertake the operation. At last, the crane offered his service. It was joyfully accepted. The feathered physician put his long neck in the lion's throat, took hold of the bone with his long bill, and extracted it, to the astonishment of all the by-standers, and then demanded the promised reward. 'A reward, indeed!' said the lion, contemptuously; 'is it not sufficient reward for thee to have permitted thy ugly neck to escape my sacred and

mighty jaws? and askest thou now for a still further reward?' The crane thought this argument, if not convincing, very powerful; he went his way, and was happy, indeed, to have escaped so imminent a danger. The application of this fable," added the eloquent Joshua, "is easy enough. Remember, dear brethren, you are under foreign subjection; recollect your past sufferings, and think yourselves happy in the comparative ease you at present enjoy; at all events, do not provoke, by vain and useless resistance, the mighty power of the Emperor." The people were instructed, and went home peaceably. Genesis Rabba, § LXIV, end.

The Traveller and the Date-tree of the Oasis

Rabbi Nahman, who was very rich, learned, and wise, requested his friend, Rabbi Isaac, to give him his blessing. "You put me in mind," said the latter, "of a certain man, who, having travelled in a desert nearly a whole day, found himself very hungry, thirsty, and fatigued. Necessity obliged him to travel onward, till at last he came to a most enchanting spot, where grew a fine date-tree, watered by a small rivulet. The fatigued traveller seated himself in the shade of the tree, plucked some of its delicious fruit, and refreshed himself. Grateful for the un-

expected relief, he thus addressed his benefactor: 'Tree! tree! what blessing can I give thee? Shall I wish thee towering branches, beautiful foliage, and refreshing shade? thou hast them already;—plenty and exquisite fruit? thou art already blessed therewith;—a refreshing stream to moisten thy root? thou hast no lack of it. The only thing I can wish thee, then, is, that every one of thy suckers, wherever they be planted, may flourish like thee.' Now, my friend, what blessing can I give thee? Learned and wise, thou art already; of riches, thou hast plenty, and thy children are many. I can, therefore, only wish that all thy descendants may be blessed like thee." Ta'anit, 5b–6a.

The Aged Planter and Hadrian

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God. I am the Lord.—Levit. xix. 32.

The Emperor Hadrian passing near Tiberias in Galilee, observed an old man digging a large trench in order to plant some fig trees. "Hadst thou properly employed the morning of thy life," said Hadrian, "thou needest not have worked so hard in the evening of thy days." "I have well employed my early days, nor will I neglect the evening of my life; and let God do what he

thinks best," replied the man. "How old mayest thou be, good man?" asked the emperor. "A hundred years," was the reply. "What," exclaimed Hadrian, "a hundred years old art thou, and still plantest trees! Canst thou, then, hope ever to enjoy the fruits of thy labor?" "Great king," rejoined the hoary-headed man, "yes, I do hope; if God permit, I may even eat the fruit of these very trees; if not, my children will. Have not my forefathers planted trees for me, and shall I not do the same for my children?" Hadrian, pleased with the honest man's reply, said, "Well, old man, if ever thou livest to see the fruit of these trees, let me know it. Dost thou hear, good old man?" and with these words he left him. The old man did live long enough to see the fruits of his industry. The trees flourished, and bore excellent fruit. As soon as they were sufficiently ripe, he gathered the most choice figs, put them in a basket, and marched off toward the emperor's residence. Hadrian happened to look out of one of the windows of his palace. Seeing a man, bent with age, with a basket on his shoulders, standing near the gate, he ordered him to be admitted to his presence. "What is thy pleasure, old man?" demanded Hadrian. "May it please your majesty," replied the man, "to recollect seeing once a very old man planting some trees, when you desired him, if ever he should gather the

fruit, to let you know. I am that old man and this is the fruit of those very trees. May it please you graciously to accept them as a humble tribute of gratitude for your majesty's great condescension." Hadrian, gratified to see so extraordinary an instance of longevity, accompanied by the full use of manly faculties and honest exertion, desired the old man to be seated, and ordering the basket to be emptied of the fruit, and to be filled with gold, gave it him as a present. Some courtiers who witnessed this uncommon scene, exclaimed, "Is it possible that our great emperor should show so much honor to a miserable Jew!" "Why should I not honor him whom God has honored?" replied Hadrian. "Look at his age, and imitate his example." The emperor then very graciously dismissed the old man, who went home highly pleased and delighted.

Leviticus Rabba, § XXV; Eccles. Rabba, to ch. II, 20; Midrash Tanhuma, Section Kodoshim (to Leviticus xxix. 23).

The Same Things no Longer the Same under Altered Circumstances

When the old man came home and exhibited the present he had received, the people were all astonished. Among the neighbors whom curiosity had brought to his house, there was a silly,

covetous woman, who, seeing so much treasure obtained for a few figs, imagined that the emperor must be very fond of that fruit; she therefore hastily ran home, and addressing her husband, said to him: "Thou son of a wretch, why tarriest thou here? Hearest thou not that Cæsar is very fond of figs? Go, take some to him, and thou mayest be as rich as thy neighbor." The foolish husband, unable to bear the reproaches of his wife, took a large sack, filled with figs, on his shoulders, and after much fatigue, arrived at the palace-gate, and demanded admittance to the emperor. Being asked what he wanted, he answered, that understanding his majesty was very fond of figs, he had brought a whole sack full, for which he expected a great reward. The officer on duty reported it to the emperor. Hadrian could not help smiling at the man's folly and impertinence: "Yes," said he to the officer, "the fool shall have his reward. Let him remain where he is, and let every one who enters the gate take one of the figs, and throw it at his face, till they are all gone; then let him depart." The order was punctually executed. The wretched man, abused, pelted, and derided, instead of wishing for gold, wished only to see the bottom of his bag. After much patience, and still more pain, he had his wish. The bag being empty, the poor fellow was dismissed. Dejected and sorrowful, he hastened

towards his home. His wife, who was all the while considering how to dispose of the expected treasure—calculating how many fine caps, gowns, and cloaks she would purchase, and contemplating with inward delight how fine she should look—how her neighbors would stare to see her dressed in silk and gold, most impatiently expected her husband's return. He came at last, and though she saw the bag empty, she imagined that his pockets at least were full. Without giving him the usual salutation, and hardly allowing him to take breath, she hastily asked him what good luck he had had. "Have patience, base and wretched woman," replied the enraged husband, "have patience, and I will tell thee. I have had both *great* and *good* luck. My great luck was, that I took to the emperor figs, and not peaches, else I should have been stoned to death:—and my good luck was, that the figs were ripe. Had they been unripe, I must have left my brains behind me."

(See the references quoted at the end of the last chapter.)

The Preposterous Snake. A Talmudic Fable

Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.—Deut. i. 13.

As long, says Rabbi JOSHUA BEN LEVI, as the lower orders submit to the direction of the higher orders of society, everything goes on well. They (*i.e.*, the rulers) decree, and God confirms. The prosperity of the state is the result. But when the higher orders, either from corrupt motives, or from want of firmness, submit to or are swayed by the opinions of the lower orders, they are sure to fall together; and the destruction of the state will be inevitable. To illustrate this important truth, he related the following fable:

THE SERPENT'S TAIL AND ITS HEAD.

The serpent's tail had long followed the direction of the head, and all went on well. One day the tail began to be dissatisfied with this natural arrangement; and thus addressed the head:—"I have long, with great indignation, observed thy unjust proceedings. In all our journeys, it is *thou* that takest the lead; whereas I, like a menial servant, am obliged to follow behind. Thou appearest everywhere foremost; but I, like a miserable slave, must remain in the

background.—Is this just?—Is it fair? Am I not a member of the same body? Why should not I have its management as well as thou?"—"Thou!" exclaimed the head, "thou, silly tail, wilt manage the body! Thou hast neither eyes, to see danger—nor ears, to be apprised of it—nor brains, to prevent it. Perceivest thou not, that it is even for thy advantage that I should direct and lead?" "For my advantage, indeed!" rejoined the tail. "This is the language of all and every usurper. They all pretend to rule for the benefit of their slaves;—but I will no longer submit to such a state of things. I insist upon, and will take the lead in my turn." "Well, well!" replied the head, "be it so. Lead on." The tail, rejoiced, accordingly took the lead. Its first exploit was to drag the body into a miry ditch. The situation was not very pleasant. The tail struggled hard, groped along, and by dint of great exertion got out again; but the body was so thickly covered with dirt and filth, as hardly to be known to belong to the same creature. Its next exploit was to get entangled among briars and thorns. The pain was intense; the whole body was agitated; the more its truggled the deeper the wounds. Here it would have ended its miserable career, had not the head hastened to its assistance, and relieved it from its perilous situation. Not contented, it still persisted in keeping the lead. It marched

on,—and, as chance would have it, crept into a fiery furnace. It soon began to feel the dreadful effects of the destructive element. The whole body was convulsed,—all was terror, confusion, and dismay. The head again hastened to afford its friendly aid.—Alas! it was too late. The tail was already consumed. The fire soon reached the vital parts of the body—it was destroyed—and the head was involved in the general ruin.

What caused the destruction of the head? Was it not because it suffered itself to be guided by the imbecile tail?—Such will, assuredly, be the fate of the higher orders, should they suffer themselves to be swayed by popular prejudices.

Deuteronomy Rabba, § I.

The Doctrine of Resurrection Supported by that of Creation

There were discovered on the fragments of an ancient tombstone, Greek words to the following purpose: "*I was not, and I became: I am not, but shall be.*" The same thought is expressed in the following reply of R. Gebiha to a sceptic.

A freethinker said once to R. Gebiha, "Ye fools, who believe in a resurrection! See ye not that the living die?—how, then, can ye believe that the dead shall live?" "Silly

man," replied Gebiha, "thou believest in a creation—well, then, if what never before existed, exists, why may not that which once existed, exist again?" Sanhedrin, 91a.

The Sufferings of the Jews Under Hadrian

I

Of all the tyrants that afflicted and persecuted the Jewish nation, none ever acted with greater cruelty toward them, nor made them drink deeper of the bitter cup of affliction, than the Emperor Hadrian. Provoked by their repeated endeavors to shake off the iron yoke which he and his predecessors had imposed upon them; and exasperated at their heroic resistance during the siege of Bethar, which city they valiantly defended for a considerable time, he conceived a deadly hatred against them. After causing the most dreadful slaughter among them, he ordered vast numbers to be publicly sold for slaves and so harassed and distressed the miserable few that were unhappy enough to escape his immediate vengeance, as to fill their minds with despair. Hence the detestation in which his memory was held among the early Jewish writers—many of whom, most likely, felt his oppressions, and were eye-witnesses to the calamities of their brethren. The most diabolical acts of tyranny are ascribed to him; and his

name is never mentioned without maledictions. Among many acts of his cruelty they relate the following:—"He caused guards to be placed at the principal roads of Emmaus, Lekitaja [Lukyeh], and Beth El. 'Now,' said he, 'if they escape from one place, they are sure to be caught in another.' As great numbers had concealed themselves in woods, caves, and inaccessible spots, he, in order to draw them from their hiding-places, ordered it to be proclaimed that the emperor's anger was appeased, and that whoever wished to avail himself of the royal clemency should appear before him, at a stated period, in the valley of Rimmon. Many, confiding in the royal assurance, came and presented themselves at the appointed time. The tyrant was at dinner, in his pavilion. Beholding the assembled multitude, he said to his lieutenant: 'Mind, I expect that before I finish this crust of bread, and the thigh of this fowl, not one of those wretches shall remain alive.' The lieutenant obeyed, the legions were ordered to fall upon the defenceless people, and they were massacred without remorse. Those that remained concealed escaped, indeed, immediate destruction, but they were reserved for still greater calamities. Hunger and want reduced them to such extremities, that they were obliged to feed on the putrid bodies of the slain. The Midrash relates, that two of those unfortunate

men, being concealed in a cave, and their scanty stock of provision being exhausted, one said to the other, 'Go forth, and see whether thou canst find anything to support life.' The man went and found the murdered body of his father. After bedewing it with tears, and lamenting his own hard fate, he interred it, and placed a sign on the grave. He then went in search of food, but finding none, he returned to his hiding-place. His companion seeing him come home empty-handed, said, 'Now let me go; perhaps I may be more fortunate.' He went, and wandered about for some time. At last he came to the spot where his companion had been before, and where he had buried his father. The man perceiving a grave, opened it, and took out the dead body, carried it home, dressed it, ate part of it, and gave some to his companion, who, almost perishing with hunger, greedily devoured it. Having satisfied the immediate cravings of nature, he inquired of his companion where he got the body. 'In such and such a place,' answered the latter; describing the sign he found on the grave. The man perceived too late that it was the body of his parent. He rent his garments, tore the hair of his head, and in a fit of despair, cried out, '*Miserable and detested wretch that I am, I have fed on the mangled limbs of my own father!*' "

Ekah Rabbati, ch. I, to Lamentations I, 16.

Sufferings of the Jews Under Hadrian

II

As a further specimen of Hadrian's cruelty, the Midrash relates the following:—

A poor Israelite happening to pass the emperor, greeted him with great humility and respect. "Who art thou?" demanded the emperor. The man answered that he was a poor Jew. "How dare a miserable Jew have the impertinence to salute the emperor?" exclaimed the tyrant, and ordered his head to be struck off. Another Jew, hearing of this act of cruelty and being obliged to pass the same way, thought it best not to notice the emperor. But Hadrian perceiving him, called him, and demanded who he was. "An unfortunate Jew," was the answer. "And dare a miserable Jew have the insolence to pass the emperor without saluting him," exclaimed the tyrant; and ordered his head to be struck off. "Great king," said one of the courtiers, who happened to be present, "your conduct appears to me very strange. One person you doom to death for saluting you, and the other for not saluting you!" "Hold thy peace," said the tyrant; "Hadrian doth not want to be taught how to distress his enemies."

Ekah Rabbati, ch. III, to Lamentations III, 59.

On Vows in Cases Previously Binding on the Conscience. A Reply of Rabbi Yudan

A CERTAIN person came to Rabbi Yudan, and said, "Rabbi, absolve me from a vow I have made." "What is it, then, thou hast vowed?" "I have vowed," replied the man, "not to earn anything." "Not to earn anything!" exclaimed the Rabbi; "what person can be so foolish as to make such a vow!" "I only meant," rejoined the man, "not to earn anything by playing at dice." "And from this vow thou wouldst be absolved?" said the Rabbi. "Oh! I see thou wishest to gamble again!—No, no, of such a vow I cannot absolve thee."

Yerushalmi Nedarim, V, 5.

Poverty no Proof of Divine Disfavor.—A Conversation between Turnus Rufus and Rabbi Akiba

TURNUS RUFUS once put the following question to Rabbi Akiba:—"If it be true, as I often heard you declare, that your God is the friend of the poor, then why does he not maintain them; or, in other words, why does he suffer them to languish in poverty?"—"The reason," replied Akiba, "is, that *we* may have the merit of relieving them, and thereby be saved from the

torments of Gehinnom." *—"And do you," resumed the general, "call this a merit? I should rather call it a demerit; nay, a crime, for which you well deserve the punishment of Gehinnom. For, suppose a king were angry with one of his slaves, and ordered him into prison, there to be kept without either meat or drink; would not the king have just reason to be displeased with any one who should dare to supply the prisoner with either?" "Suppose, rather," said the Rabbi, "that the king's displeasure were to fall on one of his own sons, and that in the moment of anger he were to order him into confinement, there to be kept without food; think you the king would be angry if any of his subjects, out of loyalty to the father, were to relieve the distress of the son? Would he not rather reward them for it?—Besides, it is even the will of God that we should relieve the poor: for thus he has declared by his prophet Isaiah, 'O break thy bread to the hungry, and bring the distressed poor into thy house.'—There must, therefore, be a merit in relieving them."

Baba Batra, 10a.

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* Hell.

Scrupulous Honesty. Exemplified in the Hospitable Rabbi Phinehas

Among the various virtues that adorned the ancient Hebrews, hospitality was not the least. They took pleasure in entertaining strangers, and administering to their comfort. It happened that two travellers came to the residence of Rabbi Phinehas, the son of Yair. The Rabbi bid them enter, take some refreshment, and stay with him over night. To this they willingly consented. They had with them a few measures of barley, which they probably intended to sell the first market-day: these they gave their kind host, to save for them till their departure. Early the next morning, they took leave of the Rabbi, thanking him for his hospitality, and proceeded on their journey. But in their hurry they forgot the barley. Phinehas waited several days; but finding they did not return, he ordered the barley to be sown, and the produce to be taken care of. More than a year elapsed before the travellers returned. As soon as Phinehas saw them, he knew them again.—"I suppose," said he, "you are come for the barley." "Yes, Rabbi," replied they; "when we were last here, we were so delighted with thy hospitality, that we never thought of the deposit till we were too far off

to return. But never mind the barley; we suppose it is spoiled, and hardly worth taking away."—"You are mistaken," said the good Phinehas, "your barley is as good as ever." He then led them to the barn, and to their great surprise and joy, delivered to them about 500 measures; the produce of that which they had left behind. Deuteronomy Rabba, § III.

The Fox and the Fish; A Fable of Rabbi Akiba

It was the lot of Rabbi Akiba to live in most calamitous times. Jerusalem was in ruins; the flower of the nation had either perished during the war, or had been carried in captivity to grace the triumph of the conqueror; and the miserable remnant that was permitted to remain in their once happy, but then desolated country, groaned under the iron yoke of the Romans; who, attributing the heroic resistance which the people had made to their arms, and the obstinacy with which they had defended their country, to the spirit of their religion, wished totally to abolish it; and with this view forbade them its free exercise, and the study of the law. Akiba observed the deplorable condition of his brethren; and, fearing lest the knowledge of the law should be totally lost, ventured, notwithstanding the Roman decrees, to instruct the people in their religious duties, and

to teach the law publicly. One day, as he was thus laudably engaged, Pappos, the son of Judah, a man well-known for his learning, represented to him the imprudence of thus acting contrary to the Roman edicts; and said to him, "*Akiba, art thou not afraid of this nation?*" (alluding to the Romans). Thus wishing to deter him from so dangerous an employment, by intimating that there are times when prudence requires us to yield to circumstances. Akiba, whose opinion was, that no circumstance whatever can justify an Israelite to forsake his religion, being also persuaded that the calamities which the nation then experienced were to be attributed to their iniquities and that their only chance of deliverance was in strictly adhering to the laws of God, said to him, "Pappos, art thou the man of whom it is said, *he is wise?* Surely thy words show that thou art a fool." And in order to expose to his audience the folly of that policy, commonly called *expedience*, which often sacrifices permanent good to momentary advantages, he told them the following fable:

The fox, said he, once took a walk by the side of a river, and observed the fish hurrying to and fro, in the greatest agitation and alarm. Curious to know the cause of so much confusion head dressed himself to them, and said, "Friends, may I be so bold as to ask why you are so much agitated?" "We are endeavoring," replied the

fish, "to flee from our enemies, and avoid the many nets and snares which they have prepared for us." "Oh! oh!" said the cunning fox, "if that be all,—I can tell you an easy way how to secure your safety. Come along with me on dry land, where we may dwell together in tranquillity, in the same manner as our ancestors did before us." The fish perceiving the treachery of their insidious adviser, said to him, "Fox! fox! art thou he who is considered as the most sagacious of animals! surely thy counsel proves thee a very great fool. If, even in our own native element, we are beset with so many dangers, what security can we expect to find on an element so repugnant to our nature, and so contrary to our habits?"

"It is even so with us," continued the pious Rabbi;* "if, even by partially following that

* This truly great man was not permitted to exert his pious endeavors long. He was thrown into prison, and, at last, publicly executed under the greatest torments, by the order of the Emperor Hadrian.

The Talmudists tell us, that after he had been some time imprisoned, it so happened that Pappos was thrown in the same dungeon. When Akiba beheld him, he asked him, "Pappos, what has brought thee hither?"—as much as to say, how comes it that thy time-serving policy did not protect thee? To which Pappos replied: "Happy art thou, Akiba, who sufferest for the law—woe to me, who suffer for vain things." Thus retracting his former opinion, and acknowledging that, when our religion is in danger, it becomes our bounden duty cheerfully to lay down our lives for its preservation.

law, of which it is said, '*It is thy life, and length of days*,' we experience so much distress and oppression, what think you will be our lot should we entirely abandon it?"

Berakot, 61b; Yebamot, 108b; Midrash to Proverbs, IX, 2.

The Climax of Benevolence; or, the Golden Ladder of Charity. From Maimonides, after the Talmud

THERE are eight degrees or steps in the duty of charity.

The first and lowest degree is, to give—but with reluctance or regret. This is the gift of the *hand*, but not of the *heart*.

The second is, to give cheerfully, but not proportionately to the distress of the sufferer.

The third is, to give cheerfully and proportionately, but not until we are solicited.

The fourth is, to give cheerfully, proportionately, and even unsolicited; but to put it in the poor man's hand: thereby exciting in him the painful emotion of shame.

The fifth is, to give charity in such a way that the distressed may receive the bounty, and know their benefactor, without their being known to him. Such was the conduct of some of our ancestors, who used to tie up money in the hind-corners of their cloaks, so that the poor might take it unperceived.

The sixth, which rises still higher, is to know the objects of our bounty, but remain unknown to them. Such was the conduct of those of our ancestors, who used to convey their charitable gifts into poor people's dwellings; taking care that their own persons and names should remain unknown.

The seventh is still more meritorious, namely, to bestow charity in such a way that the benefactor may not know the relieved objects, nor they the name of their benefactor; as was done by our charitable forefathers during the existence of the temple. For there was in that holy building a place called the *Chamber of Silence or Inostentation,* wherein the good deposited secretly whatever generous hearts suggested, and from which the most respectable poor families were maintained with equal secrecy.*

Lastly, the eighth and the most meritorious of all, is to anticipate charity, by preventing poverty; namely, to assist the reduced brother, either by a considerable gift, or a loan of money, or by teaching him a trade, or by putting him in the way of business, so that he may earn an honest livelihood; and not be forced to the dreadful alternative of holding up his hand for charity. And to this Scripture alludes, when it says, "And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt *relieve*

* Hence, probably, the origin of charity-boxes.

him: *yea, though he be a stranger or a sojourner;* that he may live with thee."—Levit. xxv. 35. This is the highest step and the summit of charity's Golden Ladder.

Maimonides, Yad ha-Hazakah, Mattenot 'Aniyyim, X, 7–13; cf. Kohler, "Jewish Encyclopedia," III, 670a.

Rabbi Simeon and the Jewels

Rabbi Simeon, the son of Shetah, once bought a camel of an Ishmaelite: his disciples took it home; and, on removing the saddle, discovered a band of diamonds concealed under it. "Rabbi! Rabbi!" exclaimed they, "the blessing of God maketh rich," intimating that it was a God-send. "Take the diamonds back to the man of whom I purchased the animal," said the virtuous Rabbi: "he sold me a camel—not precious stones." The diamonds were accordingly returned, to the no small surprise of the proper owner: but the Rabbi preserved the much more valuable jewels—Honesty and Integrity.

Yerushalmi, Baba Mezi'a II, 5; Deuteronomy Rabba, § III.

He Who Wrongs the Dishonest under the Pretence of their Dishonesty, Renders Himself an Accomplice; or, Rabbi Huna Reproved

Rabbi Huna dealt in wine, of which he kept a large store. He had the misfortune to have four hundred barrels of his wine spoiled and unfit for sale. Rabbi Jehudah and some of the wise men went to condole with him. After expressing their sorrow at his heavy loss, they begged him to examine and review his general conduct. "My friends," said Huna, who, in fact, was a very pious man, "do you then suspect me of having committed any sin deserving of so severe a punishment?" "And do you, then," asked the sages in their turn, "imagine that the Divine Judge chastises without a cause?" "Well, then," said Huna, "if you know anything wrong of me, you had better tell me." His learned friends then told him they had been informed, that he neglected to give his gardeners the branches of the vines (then considered as their legal dues).

"It is very true," rejoined the Rabbi; "but what crime is there in that? Know ye not that gardeners are not very honest, and that they generally take much more than their due?" "True," said the wise men; "but do you forget

what the proverb says,—He that steals from the dishonest, partakes of their plunder?" Intimating that we must act honestly, even toward those who injure us. Huna, although rich, powerful, and learned, was not ashamed to acknowledge his fault. He repaired his past errors, and thanked the wise men for the moral lesson they gave him.

Berakot, 5b.

Scrupulous Honesty—Exemplified in the Conduct of Rabbi Saphra

Rabbi Saphra wished to dispose of one of his estates, for which he asked a certain price. An individual who had an inclination to purchase it, made him an offer, which, being much less than the real value of the estate, was refused. Some time after, the Rabbi, being in want of money, resolved in his mind to accept the sum offered. In the interim, the individual who had made the offer, desirous of possessing the estate, and ignorant of the Rabbi's determination, came and proposed to give him the sum first demanded. But the good Saphra refused to take it. "I have," said he, "made up my mind before thou camest, to take the sum thou didst first offer; give it me, and I shall be satisfied;

my conscience will not permit me to take advantage of thy ignorance."

Baba Batra, 88a; Makkot, 24a; Rashi to Makkot, l. c.; Sheiltet de-Rab Ahai Gaon, § 36 (ed. Venice, 1546, p. 14a); Isaac Aboab, Menorat Ha-Maor, part II, ch. I, § 46.

Reverence for Truth and Simplicity not to be Sacrificed to the Forms of Courtesy—A Lesson of Rabbi Saphra

It happened that Rabbi Saphra took a walk with his disciples. As they went along, they met, at some distance from the town, a learned man, who, supposing that the Rabbi came purposely to meet him, thanked him for his condescension. "Do not thank me," said Saphra, "I only came to take a walk." The man was disconcerted, and betrayed some confusion. The disciples, who witnessed what passed, asked their master why he acted thus. "Would you, then, have me guilty of a falsehood?" said the pious Rabbi. "Nay," rejoined his disciples, "but thou mightest have been silent." "My children," said the virtuous instructor, "it becomes not a son of Israel to assume a merit not due to him; nor to cause, either by words or their absence, a false impression upon the mind of a neighbor."

(See the references in the last chapter.)

The Twofold Charity of the Benevolent Physician, Abba Umana

Abba Umana, a Jewish physician, was as much celebrated for his piety and humanity, as for his medical skill. He made no distinction between rich and poor, and was particularly attentive to learned men, from whom he never would accept the least reward for his professional services; considering them as a sort of fellow-laborers, whose functions were still more important than his own; since they were destined to cure the diseases of the mind. Unwilling to deter people from profiting by his medical knowledge, yet not wishing to put anyone to the blush for the smallness of the fee they might be able to give, he had a box fixed in his ante-chamber, into which the patients threw such sums as they thought proper. His fame spread far and wide. Abaye, who was then the chief of the Academy, heard of it; and wishing to know whether everything reported of that benevolent man was true, sent to him two of his disciples, who were slightly indisposed. The physician received them kindly, gave them some medicine, and requested them to stay in his house over night. The offer was readily accepted. They remained till the next morning, when they departed, taking with them a piece of

tapestry, which had served as a covering to the couch on which they had slept. This they carried to the market-place; and waiting till their kind host had arrived, pretended to offer it for sale, and asked him how much he thought it worth. Abba Umana mentioned a certain sum. "Dost thou not think it worth more?" asked the men. "No," answered the physician; "this is the very sum I gave for one much like it." "Why, good man," rejoined the disciples, "this is thine own: we took it from thy house. Now tell us truly, we beseech thee, after missing it, hadst thou not a very bad opinion of us?" "Certainly not," replied the pious man; "ye know that a son of Israel must not impute evil intentions to anyone, nor judge ill of a neighbor by a single action; and since I was satisfied in my mind that no ill use would be made of it, let it even be so. Sell it, and distribute the money among the poor." The disciples complied with his wishes, left him with admiration and thanks, and increased, by their report, his well-earned fame.

But the most noble trait in this good man's character was, that he never accepted any remuneration from the poor, and even provided them with everything that could, during their illness, contribute to their comfort; and when he had, by his skill and assiduity, restored them to health, he would give them money, and say—

"Now, my children, go and purchase bread and meat; these are the best and only medicines you require." Ta'anit, 21b, et seq.

Folly of Idolatry—A Traditional Tale Respecting Abraham

Terah, the father of Abraham, says tradition, was not only an idolater, but a manufacturer of idols, which he used to expose for public sale. Being obliged, one day, to go out on particular business, he desired Abraham to superintend for him. Abraham obeyed reluctantly. "What is the price of that god?" asked an old man, who had just entered the place of sale, pointing to an idol to which he took a fancy. "Old man," said Abraham, "may I be permitted to ask thine age?" "Threescore years," replied the age-stricken idolater. "Threescore years!" exclaimed Abraham, "and thou wouldest worship a thing that has been fashioned by the hands of my father's slaves within the last four-and-twenty hours? Strange! that a man of sixty should be willing to bow down his gray head to a creature of a day!" The man was overwhelmed with shame, and went away. After this there came a sedate and grave matron, carrying in her hand a large dish with flour. "Here," said she, "I have brought an offering

to the gods. Place it before them, Abraham, and bid them be propitious to me." "Place it before them thyself, foolish woman!" said Abraham; "thou wilt soon see how greedily they will devour it." She did so. In the mean time Abraham took a hammer, broke the idols in pieces, all excepting the largest, in whose hands he placed the instrument of destruction. Terah returned, and with the utmost surprise and consternation beheld the havoc among his favorite gods. "What is all this, Abraham! What profane wretch has dared to use our gods in this manner?" exclaimed the infatuated and indignant Terah. "Why should I conceal anything from my father," replied the pious son. "During thine absence there came a woman with yonder offering for the gods. She placed it before them. The younger gods, who, as may well be supposed, had not tasted food for a long time, greedily stretched forth their hands, and began to eat, before the old god had given them permission. Enraged at their boldness, he rose, took the hammer, and punished them for their want of respect." "Dost thou mock me? Wilt thou deceive thy aged father?" exclaimed Terah, in a vehement rage;—"do I then not know that they can neither eat, nor stir, nor move?" "And yet," rejoined Abraham, "thou payest them divine honors—adorest them—and wouldest have me

worship them!" It was in vain Abraham thus reasoned with his idolatrous parent. Superstition is ever both deaf and blind. His unnatural father delivered him over to the cruel tribunal of the equally idolatrous Nimrod. But a more merciful Father—the gracious and blessed Father of us all—protected him against the threatened danger; and Abraham became the father of the faithful.

Genesis Rabba, § XXXVIII; Tanna debe Eliyahu, II, 25.

Abraham's Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace

ABRAHAM being brought before Nimrod, was urged, by the tyrant, to worship the fire. "Great king," said the father of the faithful, "would it not be better to worship *water?* It is mightier than fire, having the power to extinguish it." "Worship the water, then," said Nimrod. "Methinks," rejoined Abraham, "it would be more reasonable to worship the *clouds*, since they carry the waters, and throw them down upon the earth." "Well, then," said the impatient king, "worship the clouds, which, by thine own confession, possess great power." "Nay," continued Abraham, "if power is to be the object of adoration, the preference ought to be given to the *wind*, which by its greater force scatters the clouds, and drives them before it."

"I see," said Nimrod, "we shall never have done with this prattler. Worship the wind, then, and we will pardon thy former profanations." "Be not angry, great king," said Abraham; "I cannot worship the fire, nor the water, nor the clouds, nor the wind, nor any of the things thou callest *gods*. The power they possess is derived from a Being, not only most powerful, but full of *mercy* and *love*. The Creator of heaven and earth, him alone will I worship." "Well, then," said the tyrant, "since thou refusest to adore the fire, thou shalt speedily be made sensible of its mighty force." He ordered Abraham to be thrown into a fiery furnace. But God delivered him from the raging flames, and made him a source of blessing to many nations.

Genesis Rabba, § XXXVIII; for parallels, see "Jewish Encyclopedia," I, pp. 86, 88.

No Loss of Dignity from any Innocent Means of Promoting Peace and Harmony; or, Rabbi Meir and the Unhoused Wife

Seek peace, and pursue it.—Psalm xxxiv. 14.

Rabbi Meir was accustomed to preach publicly for the edification of the people, on the eve of the Sabbath. Among his numerous audience, there was a woman, who was so de-

lighted with his discourse, that she remained until he had concluded. Instructed and pleased, she went toward home to enjoy the repast which was generally prepared for the honor of the day; but was greatly disappointed, on arriving near her house, to find the lights extinguished, and her husband standing at the door in very ill-humor. "Where hast thou been?" exclaimed he, in a tone that at once indicated that he was not much pleased with her absence. "I have been," replied the woman, mildly, "to hear our learned Rabbi preach, and a delightful discourse it was." "Was it?" rejoined the husband, who affected to be something of a wit. "Well, then, since the Rabbi has pleased thee so much, I vow that thou shalt not enter this house until thou hast spit in his face, as a reward for the entertainment he has afforded thee." The woman, astonished at so unreasonable a demand, thought at first her husband was joking, and began to congratulate herself on his returning good humor; but she was soon convinced that it was no jest. The brute insisted on her spitting in the preacher's face, as the sole condition of being re-admitted into the house; and as she was too pious to offer such an indignity to any person, much less to so learned a man, she was constrained to remain in the street. A charitable neighbor offered her an asylum, which was gladly accepted. There

she remained some time, endeavoring in vain to mollify her husband, who still persisted in his first demand. The affair made some noise in the town, and a report of the transaction was communicated to Rabbi Meir, who immediately sent for the woman. She came: the good Rabbi desired her to be seated. Pretending to have pain in his eyes, he, without taking the least notice of what had transpired, asked her, whether she knew any remedy for it. "Master," said the woman, "I am but a poor ignorant creature; how should I know how to cure thine eyes?" "Well, well," rejoined the Rabbi, "do as I bid thee—spit seven times in mine eyes—it may produce some good." The woman, who believed there was some virtue in that operation, after some hesitation, complied. As soon as it was done, Meir thus addressed her: "Good woman, go home, and tell thy husband—'It was thy desire that I should spit in the Rabbi's face once—I have done so; nay, I have done more, I have spit in it seven times—now let us be reconciled.'"

Meir's disciples, who had watched their master's conduct, ventured to expostulate with him on thus permitting a woman to offer him such an indignity, observing that this was the way to make the people despise the law and its professors. "My children," said their pious in-

structor, "think ye that your master ought to be more punctilious about his honor than his *Creator?* Even He, the Adorable, blessed be He, permitted His holy name to be obliterated,* in order to promote peace between man and wife, and shall I consider anything as an indignity that can effect so desirable an object? Learn, then, that no act is disgraceful that tends to promote the happiness and peace of mankind. It is vice and wickedness only that can degrade us."

Leviticus Rabba, § IX; Numbers Rabba, § IX.

The Lawful Heir

A rich Israelite, who dwelt at a considerable distance from Jerusalem, had an only son, whom he sent to the Holy City for education. During his absence, the father was suddenly taken ill. Seeing his end approaching, he made his will, by which he left all his property to a slave whom he named, on condition that he should permit his son to select out of that property any single thing he might choose. No sooner was the master dead, than the slave, elated with the prospect of so much wealth, hastened to Jerusalem, informed the son of what had taken place, and showed him the will. The young

* See Numbers v. 23.

Israelite was plunged into the deepest sorrow by this unexpected intelligence. He rent his clothes—strewed ashes on his head—and lamented the loss of a parent whom he tenderly loved, and whose memory he still revered. As soon as the first transports of grief were over, and the days allotted for mourning had passed, the young man began seriously to consider the situation in which he was left. Born in affluence, and grown up under the expectation of receiving, after his father's demise, those possessions to which he was so justly entitled, he saw, or imagined he saw, his expectations disappointed and his worldly prospects blighted. In this state of mind, he went to his instructor, a man eminent for his piety and wisdom, acquainted him with the cause of his affliction, made him read the will, and in the bitterness of distress, ventured to express his thoughts—that his father, by making such a strange disposition of his property, showed neither good sense nor affection for his only child. "Say nothing against thy father, young man," spake the pious instructor; "thy father was both a wise man, and an affectionate parent; the most convincing proof of which he gave by this very will." "By this will!" exclaimed the young man,—"by this will!—Surely, my honored master, thou art not in earnest. I can see neither wisdom in bestow-

ing his property on a slave, nor affection in depriving his only son of his legal rights." "Thy father has done neither," rejoined the learned instructor, "but like a just, loving parent, has by this very will secured the property to thee, if thou hast sense enough to avail thyself of it." "How! how!" exclaimed the young man, in the utmost astonishment. "How is this! Truly I do not understand thee." "Listen, then," said the friendly instructor; "listen, young man, and thou wilt have reason to admire thy father's prudence. When he saw his end approaching, and that he must go in the way in which all mortals must sooner or later go, he thought within himself,—'Behold, I must die; my son is too far off to take immediate possession of my estate,—my slaves will no sooner be certain of my death, than they will plunder my property; and to avoid detection, will conceal my death from my beloved child; and thus deprive him even of the melancholy consolation of mourning for me.' To prevent the first, he bequeathed his property to a slave, whose apparent interest it would be to take care of it. To insure the second, he made it a condition that thou shouldest be allowed to select something out of that property. The slave, thought he, in order to secure his apparent legal claim, would not fail to give the speeedy information, as indeed he has done." "Well!" exclaimed the young man,

rather impatiently, "what benefit is all this to me? Will this restore me the property of which I have been so unjustly deprived?" "Ah!" replied the good man, "I see that wisdom resides only with the aged. Knowest thou not that whatever a slave possesses belongs to his lawful master? And has not thy father left thee the power of selecting out of his property any one thing thou mightest choose? What hinders thee, then, from choosing that very slave as thy portion; and by possessing him, thou wilt, of course, be entitled to the whole property. This, no doubt, was thy father's intention." The young Israelite, admiring his father's wisdom, no less than his master's sagacity, took the hint; chose the slave as his portion, and took possession of his father's estates. After which, he gave the slave his freedom, together with a handsome present; convinced, at the same time, that *wisdom resides with the aged, and understanding in length of days.*

Midrash Tanhuma, § Lek Leka.

The Fox and the Rift in the Garden-wall:—A Talmudic Fable

There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. As he came forth from his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labor, which he may carry away in his hand.—Eccles. v. 13–15.

THESE facts, which the royal philosopher stated as the result of his own experience, the learned GENE BA illustrated by the following apologue:—

"The fox," says he, "once came near a very fine garden, where he beheld lofty trees laden with fruit that charmed the eye. Such a beautiful sight, added to his natural greediness, excited in him the desire of possession. He fain would taste the forbidden fruit, but a high wall stood between him and the object of his wishes. He went about in search of an entrance and at last found an opening in the wall; but it was too small for his big body. Unable to penetrate, he had recourse to his usual cunning. He fasted three days, and became sufficiently reduced to crawl through the small aperture. Having effected an entrance, he carelessly roved about in this delightful region, making free with its exquisite produce, and feasting on its most

rare and delicious fruit. He staid for some time and glutted his appetite, when a thought struck him, that it was possible he might be observed, and, in that case, he should pay dearly for the enjoyed pleasure. He therefore retired to the place where he had entered, and attempted to get out; but to his great consternation he found his endeavors vain. He had, by indulgence, grown so fat and plump, that the same space would no more admit him. 'I am in a fine predicament,' said he to himself. 'Suppose the master of the garden were now to come, and call me to account, what would become of me! I see my only chance of escape is to fast and half-starve myself.' He did so with great reluctance, and, after suffering hunger for three days, he, with difficulty, made his escape. As soon as he was out of danger, he took a farewell view of the garden, the scene of his delight and trouble, and thus addressed it:—'Garden! garden! thou art indeed charming and delightful, thy fruits are delicious and exquisite—but of what benefit art thou to me? What have I now for all my labor and cunning?—Am I not as lean as I was before?' "

It is even so with man. Naked comes he into the world—naked must he go out of it; and, of all his toils and labor, he can carry nothing with him, save the fruits of his righteousness.

Ecclesiastes Rabba to Eccles. V, 15.

Alexander and the Female Chief; a Moral Tale in Honor of Women

Beware how thou addest what may subtract of what thou already hast.

Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame.—Prov. xxv. 8.

Alexander, the Macedonian, whose mad ambition knew no bounds, and whose thirst of dominion torrents of human blood could not assuage, after having subdued numerous nations, desolated the fairest part of the globe, and covered the earth with mourning, was far from being contented with his vast dominions. He still sighed for new conquests, and was as restless and as ambitious as ever. Returning from his Indian expedition, he took it in his head to penetrate into the interior of Africa. He communicated his design to some Hebrew philosophers, who then were in his camp. "Thou canst not go thither," said the sages; "there are the dark mountains, which intervene, and which cannot be passed." "I do not ask you," said the headstrong chief, "whether the thing be possible or not. You know I am accustomed to conquer difficulties. My desire is, to know how to proceed." "Well, then," replied the philosophers, "get some Libyan asses, that are accustomed to walk in the dark; bind them

with pliable ropes, the ends of which keep in thine own hand; then direct, and follow." Alexander took their advice, commenced his march, and after traversing barren wastes and dreary deserts, arrived at length in a well-cultivated country, which was chiefly inhabited and governed by women. Alexander was on the point of assailing their chief town, when a female distinguished from the rest of her companions by her lofty stature and noble mien, stepped boldly forward; and after respectfully saluting Alexander, inquired what might have brought him to their secluded country. "I am come," replied the impetuous chief, "to fight and to conquer." "Great king!" exclaimed the prudent heroine, "what! art thou come to fight with females! Are then the men all dead, that thou comest to show thy valor against women? Trust me, the thought of conquering us is more easy than the deed. Besides, it becomes a wise man well to calculate the consequences of an enterprise before he undertakes it. Now, grant thou conquerest us, will this tend to thy glory? Will it not, after all, be said, the mighty Alexander has killed a few helpless women? But should fortune turn against thee, and we should prevail, with what shame and disgrace will it not sully thy renown! Will it not then be said the great warrior, the conqueror of the world, has at last been subdued—ignominiously subdued, by the hands of women? Leave us,

then, in the undisturbed possession of our own country, and turn thy mighty arms against more worthy enemies." Alexander, struck by her intrepidity, and still more by the justness of her observations, held out his hand to her in token of peace, and only requested permission to place the following inscription on the gates of the chief city:—*I, Alexander, the madman, after having conquered so many nations, have at last come to this country, and learned wisdom from women.**

Tamid, 32a; Pesikta de-R. K., IX (ed. Buber, pp. 74a-b); Leviticus Rabba, § XXVII; Midrash Tanhuma, § Emor, § VI.

Ambition Humbled and Reproved or Alexander and the Human Skull

Hell and destruction are never full; so the eyes of man are never satisfied.—Prov. xxvii. 20.

Pursuing his journey through dreary deserts and uncultivated ground, Alexander came at last to a small rivulet, whose waters glided peaceably along their shelving banks. Its smooth unruffled surface was the image of contentment, and seemed in its silence to say—this is the abode of tranquillity and peace. All was still: not a sound was heard save those

* Whether the Talmudists have taken this from the well-known story of the Amazonian Queen, I cannot tell: but they have, at all events, given us a very instructive lesson.

soft murmuring tones which seemed to whisper into the ear of the weary traveller—"Come, and partake of nature's bounty"—and to complain that such offers should be made in vain. To a contemplative mind, such a scene might have suggested a thousand delightful reflections. But what charms could it have for the soul of an Alexander, whose breast was filled with schemes of ambition and conquest; whose eye was familiarized with rapine and slaughter; and whose ears were accustomed to the clash of arms—to the groans of the wounded and the dying? Onward, therefore, he marched. Yet, overcome by fatigue and hunger, he was soon obliged to stop. He seated himself on one of the banks of the river, took a draught of water, which he found of a very fine flavor, and very refreshing. He then ordered some salt fish, with which he was well provided, to be brought to him. These he dipped in the stream, in order to take off the briny taste, and was very much surprised to find them emit a very fine fragrance. "Surely," said he, "this river, which possesses such uncommon qualities, must flow from some very rich and happy country. Let us march thither." Following the course of the river, he at length arrived at the gates of Paradise. The gates were shut. He knocked, and, with his usual impetuosity, demanded admittance. "Thou canst not be admitted here!" exclaimed a voice from within; "*this gate is the Lord's.*" "I am

the Lord—the Lord of the earth," rejoined the impatient chief—"I am Alexander the Conqueror! Will you not admit me?" "No," was the answer. "Here, we know of no conquerors—save such as conquer their passions: *None but the just can enter here.*" Alexander endeavored in vain to enter the abode of the blessed; neither entreaties nor menaces availed. Seeing all his attempts fruitless, he addressed himself to the guardian of Paradise, and said:—"You know I am a great king—a person who received the homage of nations. Since you will not admit me, give me at least something, that I may show an astonished and admiring world that I have been where no mortal has ever been before me." "Here, madman!" said the guardian of Paradise, "here is something for thee. It may cure the maladies of thy distempered soul. One glance at it may teach thee more wisdom than thou hast hitherto derived from all thy former instructors. Now go thy ways." Alexander took it with avidity, and repaired to his tent. But what was his confusion and surprise to find, on examining the received present, that it was nothing but the fragment of a human skull. "And is this!" exclaimed Alexander, "the mighty gift that they bestow on kings and heroes? Is this the fruit of so much toil, danger, and care?" Enraged and disappointed, he threw it on the ground. "Great king!" said a learned man, who hap-

pened to be present, "do not despise this gift. Despicable as it appears in thine eyes, it yet possesses some extraordinary qualities, of which thou mayest soon be convinced, if thou wilt order it to be weighed against gold or silver." Alexander ordered it to be done. A pair of scales was brought. The skull was placed in one, a quantity of gold in the other; when, to the astonishment of the beholders, the skull over-balanced the gold. More gold was added, still the skull preponderated. In short, the more gold there was put in the one scale the lower sunk that which contained the skull. "Strange!" exclaimed Alexander, "that so small a portion of matter should outweigh so large a mass of gold! Is there nothing that will counterpoise it?" "Yes," answered the philosophers, "a very little matter will do it." They then took some earth, covered the skull with it, when immediately down went the gold, and the opposite scale ascended. "This is very extraordinary!" said Alexander, astonished. "Can you explain this strange phenomenon?" "Great king," said the sages, "this fragment is the socket of the human eye, which, though small in compass, is yet unbounded in its desire. The more it has, the more it craves. Neither gold nor silver, nor any other earthly possession can ever satisfy it. But when it once is laid in the grave and covered with a little earth, there is an end to its lust and ambition." Tamid, 32b.

FACETIÆ*

Wit Like Salt: A Little Goes a Great Way

"THERE, my lad," said an Athenian once to a little Hebrew boy, by way of joke; "here is a *Pruta*,* bring me something for it, of which I may eat enough, leave some for my host, and carry some home to my family." The witty boy went and brought him salt. "Salt," exclaimed the Athenian, "I did not tell thee to bring salt!" "Nay," replied the boy, archly, "didst thou not say, bring me of what I may eat, leave, and take some home? Verily of this thou mayest eat, leave some behind, and still have plenty to carry home." [Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

The Word "Us" Includes the Hearer as Well as the Speaker

AN Athenian once said to a Hebrew lad, "Here, my boy, is some money; bring *us* some figs and grapes." The boy went and purchased the fruit, and giving half of it to the stranger, kept the other half for himself. "Is it customary here, for a messenger to take half of what

* For the entire contents of this section, see the article "Athenians in Talmud and Midrash," in "Jewish Encyclopedia," II, pp. 265–266, and the sources there cited.

† A small coin, of less value than a farthing.

he fetches?" said the Athenian, rather surprised. "No," answered the boy, "but our custom is to speak what we mean, and to do as we are desired." "But," rejoined the stranger, "I did not desire thee to take half the fruit?" "Oh!" replied the boy, shrewdly, "what else couldst thou mean by saying *bring* Us? Does not that word include the *Hearer* as well as the *Speaker?*" The Athenian smiled, and was contented.

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

The Tailor and the Broken Mortar

Answer a fool according to his folly.—Prov. xxvi. 5.

An Athenian, going along the streets of Jerusalem, found a broken iron mortar. Wishing to exhibit his wit, he entered a tailor's shop, and addressing himself to the master, said, "Master, be so kind and put a patch upon this mortar." "I will," said the Hebrew, "as soon as thou wilt make me a few threads of this material"—giving him a handful of sand.

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

Witty Retort of a Hebrew Child

"Fetch me some cheese and eggs," said an Athenian once to a little boy: the boy did as he was desired. "Now, my boy," said the stranger, "tell me which of these cheeses were made of the milk of white goats, and which of the milk of black goats!" "Thou art older than

I, and more experienced," replied the shrewd little Hebrew. "Tell me first which of these eggs came from white, and which from black hens." Ekah Rabbati I, 1; cp. also 'Abodah Zarah, 17b.

The Inhospitable Jester Taken in His Own Snare

He who intends to circumvent others teaches cunninger men a lesson to his own damage.

An inhabitant of Jerusalem coming to Athens on some particular business, entered the house of a merchant, with a view of procuring a lodging. The master of the house, being rather merry with wine, and wishing to have a little sport, told him that, by a recent law, they must not entertain a stranger, unless he first made three large strides toward the street. "How shall I know," rejoined the Hebrew, "what sort of stride is in fashion among you? Show me, and I shall know how to imitate you." The Athenian made one long stride, which brought him to the middle of his shop—the next brought him to its threshold—and the third carried him into the street. Our traveller no sooner perceived it, than he shut the street door upon the Athenian. "What," cried the latter, "do you shut me out of my house?" "Thou hast no reason to complain," replied the Hebrew. "I only do that to thee, which thou didst intend to do unto me." Remember, that he who

attempts to circumvent another has no right to complain of being himself circumvented.

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

The Enigma that Cost the Athenian His Mantle

An Athenian went once into a Hebrew school, where there were a number of boys. The master being absent, the stranger entered into a conversation with the pupils, and proposed many questions, to which they returned suitable answers. As he was on the point of departing, some of the boys said to him: "Come, let us make an agreement that whoever is unable to make a reply to a question proposed, shall forfeit his cloak." "Agreed," said the Athenian. "Since thou art the oldest," said the pupils, "it is but fair that thou shouldest have the priority." "No," said the Athenian, "make you the proposition, as I am only a stranger." They then proposed the following enigma:—"*Nine go out, eight come in; two pour out, one drinks; and four and twenty wait upon him.*" After several fruitless endeavors, the Athenian acknowledged he could not tell the meaning; and was under the necessity of giving up his cloak. Departing from thence, he met the master of the school. "Rabbi," said the Athenian, "what a shocking custom is this of yours, when a stranger comes among you, you strip him

of his clothes. Is this your hospitality?" He then told him how the pupils had deprived him of his cloak. "Perhaps," said the Rabbi, "there was a cause for it." The stranger then related to him the real facts. "Well," said the Rabbi, "do not be vexed: I will tell thee the interpretation. The *nine* that go out embrace the period of man's embryo life:—The *eight* that come in are the eight days of circumcision:—The *two* that pour out are the two living fountains which God has provided for the nourishment of infants:—The *one* that drinks is the *child* that sucks:—The *twenty-four waiters* are the four and twenty months allowed for between its birth and its weaning." The Athenian thanked him, returned, and redeemed his cloak.

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

The Quadruple Tale

"No person," said Rabbi Joshua, "ever conquered me (in wit), except two little boys, a little girl, and a widow." He then related the following tales:—

1. The Wise Child

More than the mile-stone must be consulted in deciding which is the shortest way.

Once on my travels, I came near a town where the road separated to right and left. Not knowing which to take, I inquired of a

little boy, who happened to be there, which of the two led to the town. "Both," replied he; "but that to the right is *short* and *long*—that on the left is *long* and *short*." I took that on the right, but had not far advanced, when my progress was stopped by a number of hedges and gardens. Unable to proceed, I returned, and asked the little fellow how he could be so cruel as to misdirect a stranger. "I did not misdirect thee," replied the boy. "I told thee what is true. But art thou a wise man among Israel, and canst not comprehend the meaning of a child?—It is even as I said. This road is the nearest, but still the longest, on account of the many obstructions; unless thou wouldst trespass on other people's ground, which I could hardly suppose from so good a man. The other road is, indeed, more distant, but it is, nevertheless, the shortest, being the public road, and may, therefore, be passed without encroaching on other people's property."—I admired his wit, and still more his good sense, and went on.

2. *Impertinent Curiosity Repressed*

Arriving in the city, I met another little boy carrying a covered dish. "What hast thou in that dish, child?" demanded I. "My mother would not have covered it, master, had she been willing that its contents should be known," replied the little wit!—and went on.

3. The Little Girl kind and witty

ANOTHER time, during my travels, I came near a well, where a little girl was drawing water. Being very thirsty, I asked for a draught. She handed me the pitcher. "Drink," said she, "and when thou hast done, I will draw some for the beast on which thou ridest." I quenched my thirst, and the good girl gave some to the poor animal. As I departed, I said, "Daughter of Israel! thou hast imitated the virtuous example of our good mother Rebekah." "Rabbi," said the little girl (with a smile, that indicated the most kindly feelings, and that the reply was a mere play of wit)—"Rabbi, if I have imitated the example of Rebekah, thou hast not imitated that of the faithful Eliezer." * Kind maiden, thought the Rabbi, thou possessest already more valuable ornaments than the most faithful servant can bestow—Wit, Innocence, and Good Nature. May the Lord continue to bless thee.

4. Great Learning no Excuse for Want of Good Manners

I HAPPENED once to take up my lodging at the abode of a widow. She prepared something for my dinner, which she placed before me. Being very hungry, I ate the whole, without leaving the customary remnant for the servants.

* Indicating that he had not offered her gifts.

The next day I did the same. The third day, my hostess, wishing to make me sensible of the impropriety of my conduct, so overseasoned the dish she had prepared for me, that it was impossible to eat it. Ignorant of what had been done, I began to eat; but finding the food so very salty, I laid down the spoon, and made my repast on bread. "Why eatest thou not of what has been prepared for thee?" asked my hostess. "Because I am not hungry," answered I. "If so," rejoined she, "why eatest thou bread? Do people eat that by way of dessert? But," continued she, with a significant smile, "I can perhaps guess thy motive. Thou leavest this for the poor servants, whom thou didst, yesterday and the day before, deprive of their due! Is it not so, Rabbi?" I was humbled, and acknowledged my fault.

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1; 'Erubin, 53b; Derek 'Erez Rabba, ch. VI.

The Athenian and His One-Eyed Slave

An Athenian went to study at Jerusalem. After remaining there three years and a half, and finding he made no great progress in his studies, he resolved to return. Being in want of a servant to accompny him on his journey, he went to the market-place and purchased one. Having paid the money, he began to examine his purchase more closely, and found to his surprise that the purchased servant was

blind of one eye. "Thou blockhead," said he to himself—"see the charming fruits of thy application. Here have I studied three years and a half, and at last acquired sufficient wisdom to purchase a blind slave!" "Be comforted," said the person that sold the slave; "trust me, though he is blind of one eye, he can see much better than persons with two." The Athenian departed with his servant. When they had advanced a little way, the blind slave addressed his master. "Master," said he, "let us quicken our pace, we shall overtake a traveller, who is some distance before us." "I can see no traveller," said the master. "Nor I," replied the slave; "yet I know he is just four miles distant from us." "Thou art mad, slave! How shouldest thou know what passes at so great a distance, when thou canst scarcely see what is before thee?" "I am not mad," replied the servant, "yet it is as I said; nay, moreover, the traveller is accompanied by a she-ass, who, like myself, is blind of one eye: she is big with two young, and carries two flasks, one containing vinegar, the other wine." "Cease thy prattle, loquacious fool!" exclaimed the Athenian. "I see, my purchase improves; I thought him blind only, but he is mad in the bargain." "Well, master," said the slave, "have a little patience, and thou wilt see I have told thee nothing but the truth." They journeyed on, and soon overtook the traveller; when the Athenian, to his utmost

astonishment, found everything as his servant had told him; and he begged him to explain how he could know all this without seeing either the animal or its conductor. "I will tell thee, master," replied the slave. "I looked at the road, and observing the almost imperceptible impression of the ass's hoofs, I concluded that she must be four miles distant; for beyond that the impression could not have been visible. I saw the grass eaten away on one side of the path, and not on the other; and hence judged she must be blind of one eye. A little further on we passed a sandy road, and by the impression which the animal left on the sand where she rested, I knew she must be with young. Further, I observed the impressions which the liquid had made on the sand, and found some of them appeared spongy —while others were full of small bubbles, caused by fermentation, and thence judged of the nature of the liquid." The Athenian admired the sagacity of his servant, and thenceforth treated him with great respect.

Ekah Rabbati, I, a; Sanhedrin, 104b.

The Scientific Carver

A JERUSALEMITE went once on particular business, to a certain place in the country, where he was suddenly taken ill. Seeing himself on the point of death, he called the master of the house, begged him to take care of his property until the arrival of his son; and for fear of impo-

sition, not to deliver it to him, unless he first performed three clever things as a proof of his wisdom. After the lapse of a considerable time, the son arrived at the place. Knowing the name of the person with whom his father usually resided, but ignorant of the particular street in which he lived, he in vain endeavored to find it out, as the people refused to give him the desired information. While thus embarrassed and perplexed how to proceed, he espied a person with a heavy load of wood on his shoulders. "How much for that wood?" asked the stranger. The man mentioned a certain sum. "Thou shalt have it," said the Hebrew; "go and carry it to that man's house" (mentioning the name of the person of whom he was in quest). "I will follow thee." The man did as he was desired. Arriving at the house, the carrier put down his load. "What is all this?" said the master of the house; "I have not ordered any wood." "True," said the carrier; "but the person behind me has." In the mean time the stranger arrived, informed the master who he was, adding, as no one would acquaint him with the place of his abode, he contrived this stratagem in order to discover it. "Thou art a clever fellow, indeed," said the host,—bade him enter, and insisted on his staying with him till the next day. The offer was thankfully accepted. Dinner was prepared, the cloth laid. The company, consisting of the master, his wife,

two daughters, two sons, and the stranger, were seated; and the servant brought a dish containing five chickens, which was placed upon the table. "Now," said the host to his visitor, "be so kind and carve." The latter begged at first to be excused, but at last complied; and executed the office in the following manner:— One of the chickens he divided between the master and his wife; another between the two daughters; the third between the two sons, and the remaining two he took for his own share. "A very strange way of carving, this!— My visitor must needs be a great glutton," thought the master within himself, but said nothing. The afternoon and evening were passed in various amusements, and when supper-time arrived, a very fine capon was placed upon the table. "Thou hast performed the honors of the table so well this day," said the kind host to his visitor, "that I must request thee to carve again." Our visitor took the capon before him, cut off its head, and placed it before the master; the inward part he gave to the mistress of the house; to the two daughters he gave each a wing; to the two sons a leg each; and kept the whole remainder to himself. "Upon my word," said the master, "this is too bad; I thought thy manner of carving at dinner very strange, but this is still more extraordinary. Pray, is this the way they carve at Jerusalem?" "Have patience until I explain myself, and my

conduct may, perhaps, not appear quite so strange," replied the visitor. "At dinner, five chickens were placed before me; these were to be divided among seven persons. As I could not perform the operation with mathematical exactness, I thought it best to do it arithmetically. Now, thou, thy wife, and one chicken made up the number *three;* thy two daughters and a chicken made another *three;* thy two sons and a chicken made again *three*. To make up the last number, I was compelled to take the remaining chickens to myself; for two chickens and thy humble servant made again *three*. Thus have I solved this difficult problem." "Thou art an excellent arithmetician, but a bad carver," said the master; "but proceed." The stranger continued: "In my carving in the evening, I proceeded according to the nature of things. The head being the principal part of the body; I therefore gave it thee, since thou art the head of the family. To thy wife I gave the inward part as a sign of her fruitfulness. Thy two sons are the two pillars of thy house; the legs, which are the supporters of the animal, were therefore their proper portion. Thy daughters are marriageable, and I know thou wishest to see them well settled, I therefore gave them *wings,* that they may the sooner fly abroad. As for myself I came in a boat, and intend to return in a boat; I therefore took that part which most resembles it." "Very well done," said his kind host; "I am

satisfied thou art the true son of my departed friend. Here is thy property: now go and prosper."

Ekah Rabbati, I, 1.

No Rule Without Exception

Rabbi Eliezer, who was as much distinguished by the greatness of his mind as by the extraordinary size of his body, once paid a friendly visit to Rabbi Simeon. The learned Simeon received him most cordially, and, filling a cup with wine, handed it to him. Eliezer took it, and drank it off at a draught. Another was poured out—it shared the same fate. "Brother Eliezer," said Simeon, jestingly, "rememberest thou not what the wise men have said on this subject?" "I well remember," answered the corpulent Eliezer, "the saying of our instructors—'that people ought not to take a cup at one draught.' But," added he, jocosely, "the wise men have not so defined their rule as to admit of no exception: and in this instance, friend Simeon, there are no less than three. The *cup* is *small*—the receiver large—and your *wine* so *delicious!*"

Pesahim, 86b.